OBSERVATIONS

UPON

NATURAL RELIGION

AND

CHRISTIANITY,

CANDIDLY PROPOSED:

IN A

REVIEW of the DISCOURSES

Lately publiſhed

By the LORD BISHOP of *LONDON*

In THREE VOLUMES.

——ζητῶ γαρ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὑφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐβλάβη.
Marc. Anton. l. vi. § 21.

By CHARLES BULKLEY.

LONDON:
Printed for J. NOON, at the *White-Hart*, near *Mercers-Chapel*, *Cheapſide*.
AND
J. PAYNE, at *Pope's Head*, in *Pater-noſter-Row*.
M DCC LVII.

ERRATA.

PAGE 2, *line* 6, *after* nay *put a comma*. *Ib. l.* 24, *for* chriſtanity, *r.* chriſtianity. *P.* 6. *l.* 29, *before* reaſon *r.* the. *P.* 8. *l.* 6. *after* revelation *put a full ſtop*. *P.* 15, *l.* 17, *after* evil, *put a ſemicolon*. *P.* 17, *l.* 2, *after* and *r.* a. *P.* 28, *l.* 5, *for* lives *r.* hiſtory. *P.* 30, *l.* 8, *after* world *put a comma*. *P.* 33, *l.* 24, *put a full ſtop inſtead of the ſemicolon*. *P.* 46, *l.* 14, *after the word*, deity, *put a comma*. *P.* 50, *l.* 8, *after* inſcrutable *put a full ſtop*. *P.* 69, *l.* 17, *after* it *put* !, *l.* 21, *the ſame after* to. *P.* 71, *l.* 22, *after* being *put* ?. *P.* 74, *l.* 19, *the quotation mark transfer to* we *from* he *in the next line*. *Ibid. l.* 24, *after* deſtruction *put a comma*. *P.* 78, *after* earth *put a comma*, *l. ult. after* ſupremacy *put a point of interrogation*. *P.* 79, *for* opinion *r.* opinions. *P.* 82, *l.* 25, *after* do *put* ?. *P.* 85, *l.* 12, *after* influence *put* ?. *P.* 88, *dele the comma after* in *and place it after* not. *P.* 89. *l.* 11, *for* imortalium *r.* immortalium. *P.* 92, *l.* 26, *for* Lodon *r.* London.

PREFACE.

AS the doctrine of divine placability has been particularly inſiſted upon in the following ſheets, the author gladly embraces the opportunity given him by a vacant page of enforcing the ſentiments they contain upon that intereſting ſubject, by ſome that he finds Mr. Baxter *to have advanced in relation to the ſame. That great and excellent man ſpeaking in his reaſons of the Chriſtian religion, of one, "who ſo repenteth of his ſin, "as to turn to God in holineſs of heart and "life," expreſſes himſelf as follows. "That "God can* find in his heart *to damn one that "truly loveth him, and is ſanctified, is incredi-"ble: Becauſe, 1. then God's own image ſhould "be in hell, and a ſaint be damned. 2. Becauſe "then the creature ſhould be readier to love "God, than God to love him. 3. Then a ſoul in "hell ſhould have holy deſires, prayers, praiſes, "and other acts of love. 4. And a ſoul ca-"pable of the glorifying mercy of God, ſhould "miſs of it. This therefore is not to be be-"lieved: For God cannot but take compla-"cency in them that love him, and bear his "image; and thoſe will be happy that God "takes complacency in." Again, "the ſinful "world, he tells us, is not ſo far forſaken of God "as to be ſhut up under deſperation and utter "impoſſibility of recovery and ſalvation. For,*

"*if*

" *if that were ſo, they were not* in via, *or* " *under an obligation to uſe any means, or* " *accept of any mercy, in order to their re-* " *covery, nor could they rationally do it, or* " *be perſuaded to it. There is no means to be* " *uſed where there is no end to be attained,* " *and no hope of ſucceſs.*" *He goes on to apply the argument to natural religion, by obſerving, that* the light *of* nature *does continue men* in via, *and ſupply them with the* means *of repentance. After which, he adds, that* " *the very command of* God *to uſe his ap-* " *pointed means for men's recovery, doth imply* " *that it ſhall not be in vain, and doth not* " *only ſhew a poſſibility, but ſo great a hope-* " *fulneſs of the ſucceſs to the obedient, as may* " *encourage them chearfully to undertake it* " *and carry it through. No man that is* " *wiſe and merciful, will appoint his ſubjects* " *a courſe of means to be uſed, for a thing* " *impoſſible to be got; or will ſay, labour thus* " *all thy life for it, but thou ſhalt be never* " *the nearer it, if thou do. If ſuch an om-* " *niſcient phyſician do but bid me uſe ſuch* " *means for my cure and health, I may take* " *his command for half a promiſe, if I obey.*" *The ſame honorable teſtimony we may produce in confirmation of that notion or idea of the divine juſtice, which in treating upon this ſubject has been ſuggeſted* p. 52. " *As juſtice is* " *conceived of in God*", *it is ſaid in the already mentioned treatiſe,* " *according to the image* " *in man, which we call the virtue or habit*

of

" *of juſtice, ſo it is his eternal nature, being*
" *nothing elſe but the perfection of his infinite*
" *wiſdom, and his will or goodneſs, as re-*
" *ſpecting a kingdom of ſubjects as poſſible or*
" *future.*" *Or, as the ſame ſenſe is again more briefly expreſſed in that treatiſe;* " *the*
" *eternal wiſdom and goodneſs of God, that*
" *is, the perfection of his nature and will, as*
" *related to a poſſible or a future kingdom, is*
" *denominated juſtice.*" *See* Part I. Ch. VIII. §. 31. *and* Ch. XVII. *of his treatiſe ſo intitled. That ſeventeenth chapter likewiſe and firſt part, he concludes with an obſervation, which being ſuitable to the main ſcope of our review, we ſhall make uſe of for the concluſion alſo of this preface.*

" *And ſo much of godlineſs, or religion as*
" revealed *by natural light.*

" Obj. *But all heathens and infidels find*
" *not all this in the book of nature, which*
" *you ſay is there.*

" Anſw. *I ſpeak not of what men* do *ſee,*
" *but of what they* may *ſee, if they will im-*
" *prove their reaſon. All this is undeniably*
" *legible in the book of nature: But the in-*
" *fant, the ideot, the illiterate, the ſcholar,*
" *the ſmatterer, the doctor, the conſiderate,*
" *the inconſiderate, the ſenſual, the blinded, and*
" *the willing diligent inquirer, do not* equally
" *ſee and read that which is written in the*
" *ſame characters to all.*"

THE

THE

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION Page 1

SECT. I. *On the term, revelation.* 3

SECT. II. *On the ſufficiency of reaſon and the light of nature in matters of religion.* 9

SECT. III. *On the belief of a future ſtate.* 36

SECT. IV. *On the pardon of ſin.* 41

SECT. V. *Farther reflections on the ſame ſubject.* 63

SECT. VI. *On the grace of the Redeemer* 69

SECT. VII. *On the capacity of mankind for being rationally religious.* 79

Concluſion. 92

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is perhaps as much occcaſion to defend chriſtianity, againſt its defenders as againſt its opponents. The mere ſpeculative rejecter of the goſpel is one of the feebleſt enemies it ever had. Weak arguments made uſe of in oppoſition to chriſtianity, and ſuch only, upon the whole, the rejecter of it can have to urge, if it be indeed a divine inſtitution, apparently tend, in one view of them at leaſt, to its honour and recommendation. And whatever miſchief they may otherwiſe have been the occaſion of, from whence have they been in the main derived, but from the inſufficient pleas, that have been urged in favour of it, and the wrong views, that have been given by its advocates of its evidences, doctrines, and deſign? Beſides, it is not the mere name of chriſtianity applied to ſuch or ſuch particular principles, that can render them morally ſound and wholeſome, or conducive to the great and ultimate

ends of that inſtitution. Principles, that are really and in themſelves of a bad and dangerous tendency, will do infinitely the greater harm for aſſuming that venerable character. With whatever ſolemnity or plauſibility therefore, nay, with whatever ſincerity and integrity, on the part of the repreſenter himſelf, ſuch principles may at any time be exhibited to public view, under the ſanction and authority of the chriſtian religion, he, who is, on the other ſide, convinced of their direct contrariety to the true and genuine ſpirit of the goſpel, is bound in conſcience, according to his ability and opportunity, to detect the error. For theſe reaſons I am far from thinking, that it can be any way inconſiſtent with the character of a firm believer of the goſpel, and a hearty well-wiſher to its cauſe and intereſt, to point out the miſtaken principles contained in the diſcourſes lately publiſhed by the lord biſhop of London, though it ſeems evidently to have been deſigned, that they ſhould contain a general defence of chriſtanity, and though in that light they are by great numbers very highly eſteemed. However I may differ from another in my opinion, as to the beſt and the moſt advantageous method of promoting a common cauſe, I may be altogether as much in earneſt in wiſhing the ſucceſs of it. And if I am indeed ſo, nothing will better account for the freedom

freedom taken in pointing out the different opinion, together with the reaſons, that ſupport it. This therefore is what I ſhall not ſcruple to do with reference to the diſcourſes above mentioned and to the following topics; natural and revealed religion in general; the pardon of ſin; the immortality of the ſoul; the grace of the redeemer; and the capacity of mankind for being rationally religious, in particular.

SECTION I.

As to the firſt of theſe topics, his lordſhip frequently chuſes to ſpeak of the controverſy between chriſtians and the rejecters of the goſpel, as a "diſpute between natural "and revealed religion." This I cannot but think to be, at leaſt, very incautious and unguarded language. Are they not brethren? why ſhould we be fond of making them "fall out by the way?" why not rather imitate the primitive apologiſts in the chriſtian cauſe, who inſiſted much upon the admirable harmony and conſent, that there was between them, as a powerful inducement, to mens reception of the goſpel? But however they may agree in their reſpective principles there is, nevertheleſs, according to his lordſhip, this eſſential and fundamental difference between them, that the one is a divine revelation, the other not.

" Allow, he ſays, p. 22, 3. vol. i. nature " to have all the advantages, that ever the " greateſt patrons of natural religion laid " claim to on her behalf, allow reaſon to be " as clear, as uncorrupted, as unprejudiced, " as even our fondeſt wiſhes would make " it, yet ſtill it can never be ſuppoſed, that " nature and reaſon in all their glory, can " be able to know the will of GOD, ſo " well as he himſelf knows it: and therefore " ſhould GOD ever make a declaration of " his will, that declaration muſt, according " to the nature and neceſſity of the thing, " be a more perfect rule of religion, than " reaſon and nature can poſſibly furniſh us " with." Thus again he tells us, ibid: " how " extremely wrong it is to compare natural " religion and revelation together, in order " to inquire, which is preferable; for 'tis " neither more nor leſs than inquiring, " whether we know GOD's will better than " he himſelf knows it." To the ſame purpoſe we are told p. 24. that " the only de- " bate between natural religion and revela- " tion muſt be, whether we really have a " revelation or no." So again p. 28, 9. " religion, conſidered as a rule, is the " knowledge of ſerving and pleaſing GOD: " revelation is the declaration of GOD, how " he would be ſerved and what will pleaſe " him, and, unleſs we know, what will " pleaſe GOD better, than he himſelf does, re-

" velation

" velation muſt be the beſt rule to ſerve and " pleaſe GOD by; that is, it muſt be the beſt " religion." Once more p. 38. he tells us, that " between theſe two, (*i. e.* nature and " revelation) conſidered purely as principles " of religious knowledge, it is no hard mat- " ter to judge, which is the ſafeſt and ſecu- " reſt for us to rely on, it being a matter, " that will bear no diſpute, whether our " own reaſon or GOD himſelf can beſt in- " ſtruct us in the knowledge of his will; " upon which ſingle point the whole con- " troverſy between nature and revelation " turns, as long as they are conſidered on- " ly as principles of religion, without draw- " ing into the queſtion the merits of any " particular revelation, or of any particular " ſcheme or ſyſtem of natural religion." This is the view given us, in theſe diſ- courſes, of the " turning" point in the con- troverſy ſubſiſting, between the chriſtian and the advocate for natural religion excluſively of the goſpel. But certainly the advocate for natural religion, even in this excluſive ſenſe, does not deny, that GOD has made a revelation of himſelf and of his will, and ſhewed " how he would be ſerved and pleaſed." This he expreſsly allows. But why do I ſay allow? this is what in that very character he muſt neceſſarily be ſuppo- ſed to aſſert. For the very term, religion, im- plies, as his lordſhip himſelf obſerves, a

" rule"

" rule" of human duty, or a rule by which we are to learn in what manner, to " ſerve " and pleaſe our maker." And does it not in this ſenſe implie too, that GOD has in ſome way or another revealed his will to mankind. Where, elſe, would be our rule? So that, if there be any ſuch thing as natural religion at all, and his lordſhip be not contending with a mere viſionary antagoniſt, this natural religion muſt neceſſarily implie " a re- " velation," which GOD has made by the light of reaſon and nature. By whatever method we come to the knowledge of his will, as to the way, in which he is to be " ſerved and " pleaſed," ſtill it is his revelation, and to him we owe it. The advocate for natural religion not embracing chriſtianity, never, any more than his lordſhip, made it a " matter " of diſpute, whether our own reaſon or " GOD himſelf can beſt inſtruct us in his " will;" but he maintains, that " GOD him- " ſelf" has by our own reaſon " inſtructed " us in the knowledge of his will." So far is he from pretending to ſay, that " he " knows the will of GOD better than he " himſelf does," that he profeſſes to derive all his knowledge of it from the inſtructions, which GOD " himſelf" has given him by the reaſon of his own mind. The queſtion therefore in debate between ſuch a one, and the believer of the goſpel, is not, as his lordſhip repreſents it; " whether we really have

" a

" a revelation or no;" but, whether we have more than one. And indeed, that this is the true ſtate of the controverſy, is plain, from what his lordſhip himſelf has, upon other occaſions, very frequently advanced. Thus he tells us p. 17. that " religion is *founded* " in the principles of reaſon and nature," and goes on to obſerve, how plainly and eaſily the truths and doctrines of it are to be deduced from theſe principles. And at p. 3. he tells us, that " the authority and " word of GOD is the only ſure *foundation* of " religion." Compare theſe two paſſages together, and what do they amount to, but this; that " the principles of nature and reaſon" are the " authority and the word of GOD?" thus, again he tells us p. 40. " that " men ought to obey GOD in truth and ho- " lineſs, that they may obtain his bleſ- " ſing——that ſinners ought to be puniſh- " ed——are not, nor ever were, myſteries; " becauſe theſe things were *ſufficiently pub-* " *liſhed* to the world, when men were en- " dued with *reaſon.*" What is this, but affirming, that reaſon is a revelation of GOD's will to man? ſo again p. 303, 4. " GOD " never wrought miracles to prove the dif- " ference between good and evil. And I " ſuppoſe, if any man were aſked how he " proves temperance or chaſtity to be du- " ties, murder or adultery to be ſins, he " would not recur to miracles for an ar-

" gument.

" gument. Theſe and the like duties are " enforced in the goſpel, but were always " truths and duties before our ſaviour's " coming, and we are in poſſeſſion of them " without the help of miracles and revelati- " on." " without the help of miracles," it is allowed; but not " without the help of " revelation:" becauſe, if they had not been ſome way or another revealed to us by the ſupreme being, they could not have been religious *truths*, or moral *duties*. Nay, not only does his lordſhip repreſent the light of nature as being a divine revelation, but he expreſsly inſiſts upon it, that it is by this very light, that we are to judge and finally to determine concerning the truth of every miraculous and ſpecial revelation, even of chriſtianity itſelf. " The voice of nature, " he tells us p. 264, is the voice of GOD, " and therefore cannot be contradicted by " GOD. No revelation therefore can in- " title itſelf to be conſidered, if it contra- " dicts any one plain principle of natural " religion." Thus does he make natural religion to be the very teſt and criterion of the truth of every particular and miraculous revelation. And I think according to the account, which his lordſhip has elſewhere given us, this looks very like pretending to know the will of GOD " by his own rea- " ſon, better than he knows it himſelf," and affirming that our own reaſon can

" better

" better inſtruct us in the knowledge of his " will than GOD himſelf can." Thus much however; I think, it muſt truly implie, that natural religion is a divine revelation. If it were not, could it juſtly claim to be the teſt of any other ſcheme of religion aſſuming that character? thus evident is it, even according to his lordſhip's own account of the matter, that the diſpute between the chriſtian and the rejecter of the goſpel embracing the principles of natural religion, is not, as he ſo often repreſents it to be; " whether GOD has made any reve- " lation at all; not whether we are wiſer " than GOD; not whether reaſon can in- " ſtruct us better than GOD himſelf;" but, whether GOD has in fact enforced an original and prior revelation conveyed by reaſon and the light of nature, by a ſucceding and miraculous one contained in the goſpel.

SECTION II.

But be this as it will, ſtill it is inſiſted upon, that the light of nature is wholly and abſolutely inſufficient for the purpoſes of religion. In proof of this, and of what he calls the " *corruption*, *blindneſs* and *im-* " *potence* of *nature*," his lordſhip urges at large the ſuperſtition and idolatry, that prevailed in the moſt civilized nations before the coming of Chriſt, and ſtill prevails in other civilized nations, that have not the

knowledge of the goſpel. He tells us, p. 6. with reſpect to the latter, " that here " we may hope to ſee natural religion in its " full perfection, for there is no want of " natural reaſon, nor any room to complain " of prejudices or prepoſſeſſion. But yet " alas theſe nations are held in the chains " of darkneſs and given up to the blindeſt " ſuperſtition and idolatry." And as to the former it is obſerved, p. 7. that " religion was " not the leaſt part of their inquiry; they " ſearched all the receſſes of reaſon and " nature; and had it been in the *power* of " *reaſon* and *nature* to furniſh men with juſt " notions and principles of religion, here we " ſhould have found them, but inſtead of " them we find nothing but the groſſeſt ſu- " perſtition and idolatry." Upon this foot- ing he asks, p. 8, 9. " ſince then in nothing " elſe we are grown wiſer than the heathen " world, what probability is there, that we " ſhould have grown wiſer in religion, if " we had been left as they were to mere " reaſon and nature?—what ſhall we ſay " of the Chineſe, a nation, that wants not " either reaſon or learning, and in ſome " parts of it pretend to excel the world? " they have been daily improving in the " arts of life, and in every kind of know- " ledge and ſcience; but yet in religion they " are ignorant and ſuperſtitious, and have " but very little of what we call natural re-

" ligion

" ligion among them. And what ground " is there to imagine, that reaſon would " have done more, made greater diſcoveries " of truth, or *more intirely ſubdued the paſſi-* " *ons of men*, in England or in France, or in " any other country of Europe, than it has " in the eaſtern, or ſouthern parts of the " world? Are not men as reaſonable crea- " tures in the eaſt as they are in the " weſt." Again, we are told, p. 48, 9. " Since reaſon and nature cannot find the " means of reſcuing ſinners from puniſh- " ment, and of making atonement to the " juſtice of GOD; ſince they *cannot* preſcribe " a proper ſatisfaction for ſin, in which the " honour of GOD and the ſalvation of men " ſhall be at once conſulted; ſince they " *cannot* remedy the corruption, that has " ſpread thro' the race of mankind, or in- " fuſe new principles of virtue and holineſs " into the ſouls already ſubdued to the luſt " and power of ſin; ſince, if they could " procure our pardon for what is paſt, they " *cannot* ſecure us for the future from the " ſame temptations, which by fatal experi- " ence we know we *cannot* withſtand: " ſince, I ſay, theſe things *cannot* be done " by the means of reaſon and nature, they " muſt be done by ſuch means as reaſon " and nature know nothing of." And once more, vol. iii. p. 335. he expreſſes himſelf, as follows. " It is true that there are in " the goſpel ſome inſtitutions, which in

" their own nature are no conſtituent parts
" of religion; but then they are ſuch only
" as are *neceſſary* to *enable* us to do our duty,
" by conveying new ſupplies of ſpiritual
" ſtrength to us; for want of which we
" were *unable* in the ſtate of *nature* to *ex-*
" *tricate* ourſelves from the bonds of ini-
" quity. Theſe are the additions, which
" the goſpel has made to religion. Our
" bleſſed Saviour ſaw, that the hopes of na-
" ture were obſcured, and therefore he did
" by wonderful revelations bring life and
" immortality to light again. He ſaw, that
" her powers were decayed, ſo that ſhe
" *could not* reſiſt evil, and therefore he ſup-
" plied the defect by the aſſiſtance of his
" holy ſpirit."

But you'll ſay, he tells us, p. 12. vol. i.
" are there not complete ſchemes of natu-
" ral religion drawn from principles and
" axioms of reaſon, without calling in the
" help of revelation? and are they not evi-
" dent demonſtrations, that nature is able
" to furniſh us with a religion, that is pure
" and holy and agreeable to the divine attri-
" butes? allow this; but let us then be in-
" formed how it came to paſs, that never
" any ſyſtem of this pure religion was in
" uſe and practice in any nation, or indeed
" ever fully diſcovered, till the goſpel had
" enlightened the world." To the ſame pur-
poſe it is urged, p. 157. as follows. " To

" ſay

" ſay that reaſon was ſufficient for the pur-
" poſes of religion before the publication of
" the goſpel, and to prove it by ſhewing,
" that it ſerved this purpoſe in four or five
" inſtances in an age, while millions and
" millions had no help from it, is quite
" miſtaking the point: we want ſomething
" to be of uſe to all men, and which all
" men ſtand in need of to their well being:
" you have found ſomething, that will ſerve
" perhaps one in a million, and think, that
" you have diſcovered an adequate ſupply
" for the general want. But what muſt
" become of the many thouſands, who are
" *incapable* of being the better for your me-
" thod?" Again we are told, p. 142, 3. " that
" tho' there did appear in the heathen
" world ſome ſuch great and good men,
" who were as lights ſhining in a dark
" place; yet was there not one found *able*
" to extricate himſelf from all the ſuper-
" ſtition of his country, much leſs to reduce
" the people to a practice conſiſtent to the
" pure principles of natural religion. And
" it is an obſervation true in itſelf and of
" great weight in this caſe, that not one
" country, nay not one *city* ever embraced
" the principles of pure natural religion
" upon the ſtrength of their own reaſon, or
" upon conviction from the reaſon and wiſ-
" dom of others." But it may be ſaid,
his lordſhip obſerves, p. 158, " that what

" reaſon

" reaſon did for a few, it was capable of
" doing for all, if it had been duly attend-
" ed to, and conſequently that reaſon was
" a ſufficient foundation for true religion,
" notwithſtanding that true religion was loſt
" in the world; which was not through a
" defect in reaſon, but through the abuſe
" and miſapplication of it in the generality
" of mankind. I agree the caſe to be ſo;
" but we are ſtill where we were before:
" for this general abuſe of reaſon or inatten-
" tion to the voice of it, which had ſpread
" over the whole world, had certainly a root
" in ſome general evil and corruption, that
" had infected mankind: and whatever
" reaſon was in itſelf, yet it ſtood in great
" want of a remedy for this evil, which
" had ſo univerſally darkened and obſcured
" it." Thus again, p. 160. " But the peo-
" ple themſelves, what muſt become of
" them? they have no time for ſtudie, and
" they muſt have true notions of religion at
" a cheaper rate or not at all. As religion
" is a thing, in which all men are concern-
" ed, it muſt be conveyed in a manner, that
" ſuits men of all conditions. Suppoſing
" therefore, that you have found out a way,
" by which ſome few thoughtful men ob-
" tained true notions of religion, you are
" far from having found a way of propaga-
" ting true religion in the world. Reaſon-
" ing will not do the buſineſs." It ſeems

very

very plain from theſe paſſages; that it is his lordſhip's intention to repreſent the reaſon of mankind, as being, without the aſſiſtance of the goſpel, naturally, abſolutely and univerſally incapable of being a ſufficient guide in matters of religion. Elſe, what the meaning of thoſe expreſſions; "the blindneſs, the "impotency of nature, the blindneſs of the "heathen world;" "our being ſubject to "temptations, which *reaſon* and nature *cannot* "enable us to withſtand; our not being *a-* "*ble* by their aid alone to diſcover a "proper "ſatisfaction for ſin, or the "means of "making atonement to the juſtice of GOD," "our being *unable* in the ſtate of nature to "extricate ourſelves from the bonds of in-"iquity;" "her powers being ſo decayed, "that ſhe *could not* reſiſt evil;" there "being "ſomething *wanting*," in the caſe of thoſe "who are left to their reaſon alone, which "*all* men ſtand in *need* of to their *well-be-* "*ing*; the many thouſands, who are *inca-* "*pable* of being the better for your method" *i. e.* reaſon. He "queſtions not" indeed, as we ſee, p. 13, but "that the wiſe creator "of the world has given us, whatever was "neceſſary either for the knowledge or the "performance of our duty, and that there "are ſtill in *nature* the ſeeds and principles "of religion, however buried under the rub-"biſh of ignorance and ſuperſtition" he "as little queſtions." But ſtill he repreſents the

the heathen world as being abſolutely and utterly *unable* to remove this *rubbiſh*, in order to their enjoying the benefit of theſe *natural* ſeeds and principles of religion. And certainly a light, which I cannot poſſibly come at, is exactly the ſame thing to me as my having no light at all. Or to uſe his lordſhip's own compariſon in the very caſe, as it occurs, p. 158. " ſuppoſe I ſhould ſay ſuch a man was blind, " will it be a proper replie to ſay, no, his " eyes are ſound and good, excepting only " that there is a very thick film over them " which intercepts all ſight? or would it be " proper to inſiſt, that the man wanted no " cure, becauſe he had ſound eyes? what " ſhall we do with this film then? for till " it is removed, the man might as well be " without eyes. " This," his lordſhip immediately adds, " was the very caſe of the " heathen world." They had eyes, he will very readily allow us, and thoſe ſound and good ones, too, if we will allow him, in turn, that they might as well have been *without* them. But the difference between having *no eyes* and the not being *able* to *ſee* is ſo extremely ſmall, that which ever mode of expreſſion his lordſhip may prefer, he muſt needs be underſtood as aſſerting, upon the preſent ſubject, the abſolute inability of the heathen world to attain to a ſufficient knowledge of religious and moral obligations. And indeed what does that oppoſition ſo much inſiſted upon

by

by his lordſhip between the light of nature and "the revelation of GOD's will" neceſſarily and directly implie, but that reaſon and nature do not afford mankind any revelation of the divine will or make any declaration concerning it. And is not this to aſſert their abſolute inſufficiency for the purpoſes of religion?

But to the argument itſelf: were we to admit the account, which his lordſhip has been pleaſed to give us of the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the heathen world to be a perfectly exact and true one, without one exaggerating or fallacious term, yet will it by no means juſtify the concluſion he would build upon it. I doubt not, but his chuſing to expatiate upon the ignorance and idolatry of the moſt *civilized* nations, was with a view of giving this argument its greateſt force and of rendering it indeed unanſwerable. Yet ſo it is, that this very circumſtance itſelf naturally furniſhes us with an obvious replie to it. "Can you ſay, his lordſhip very pathetically inquires p. 11, what it was, that thus "debaſed the reaſon and underſtanding of "mankind?" yes, we can, and that without any aid from his lordſhip's hypotheſis. It was in truth that very polity or civil power, under which they lived, and the authority it both claimed and exerciſed in matters of religion. "What evil was it, he goes on ibid. "that had diffuſed itſelf thro' the whole race? "and p. 13, it is aſked; "what was it, I be-

" ſeech you, that oppreſſed this light of " nature and reaſon for ſo many ages ?" I anſwer, it was prieſtly influence and power ſupported by the authority of the civil magiſtrate. This, this was the evil, which " ſo poſſeſſed their ſenſes, that ſeeing " they " did not ſee and perceiving they did not un- " derſtand." " In other matters, we are told, " p. 6. theſe nations," certain nations of the preſent heathen world, " are polite and " civilized, they are cunning traders, fine ar- " tificers, and in many arts and ſciences not " unſkillful." In the ancient heathen world too, it is obſerved ibid, " that the arts and " ſciences, philoſophy, oratory and poetry " had—obtained their juſt perfection." But, to adopt, upon this occaſion, a remark long ſince made by the noble author of the Characteriſtics; what would have been the caſe among the ancient heathens in reference to theſe very arts and ſciences, if the civil magiſtrate had taken them under his care and juriſdiction, in the ſame manner as he undertook for the ſecurity and defence of religion; if he had eſtabliſhed a certain mode, or ſyſtem in theſe ſeveral arts and ſciences, from which none were under the ſevereſt penalties to depart? would they not have been altogether as blind and ignorant in theſe reſpects, as they were in religion? And the ſame obſervation may be applied to the preſent ſtate of any civilized heathen

nations. His lordſhip repreſents it p. 7, 8. of theſe *diſcourſes*, vol. 1. as being univerſally true, that, " wherever men have been left " to mere reaſon and nature to direct them," they have fallen into the " groſſeſt ſuperſti- " tion and idolatry." But, the truth of the matter is, that in theſe civilized nations ſo much ſpoken of, " men never were left to " mere reaſon and nature." Theſe were not ſuffered to do their part. On the contrary the ſevereſt reſtraints were laid upon them. So that the corruptions of religion ſo prevalent in the polite and civilized nations of the heathen world, their ſuperſtition and idolatry, were not owing to the weakneſs of human reaſon or its inſufficiency for the purpoſes of religion, but rather to the ſtrength of human policy encouraging theſe corruptions, and to the weakneſs of human reſolution in not ſufficiently exerting itſelf againſt this palpable abuſe of human and magiſtratical influence. In other nations the ſloth and indolence of mankind in not giving themſelves the trouble to uſe and exerciſe their reaſon will abundantly account for their ſuperſtition and ignorance, inſtead of ſuppoſing that they really had, in matters of religion, no reaſon to uſe, or, which comes to the ſame thing, no ability to applie it to any religious purpoſes. And in all diſſoluteneſs of manners becoming prevalent will create a general averſion to religious inqui-

ries, an indifference to moral truth and the advancement of its intereſt, and gradually reconcile the mind of numbers to ſuperſtition as beſt ſuiting its corrupt and vicious habits. That it really is in the power of reaſon and nature to " furniſh men with juſt " principles of religion" is plain, becauſe ſome have actually with theſe aids alone come to the knowledge of ſuch principles. This his lordſhip himſelf allows. He chuſes indeed to ſpeak of them as being an exceeding few; " five or ſix in an age" at moſt. A very ſparing account truly of that great number of philoſophers, who for ſo many ages together had public ſchools of philoſophy, and ſcholars ſurely; who for a long ſucceſſion of years had whole ſects adhering to their tenets in different parts of the world and forming a very conſiderable body. In ſome of theſe ſects, tho' their names were different, their philoſophy was fundamentally the ſame, and contained the juſt and genuine principles of natural religion, however intermingled with error. And if other ſects did even by the diſtinguiſhing and moſt radical maxims of their philoſophy depart from theſe principles, yet with all theſe exceptions the knowledge of them, ſuppoſing it to have depended upon philoſophical erudition merely, muſt have been much more diffuſed, than his lordſhip would perſuade us to believe. Were not the ſentiments

timents of Confucius upon the great principles and doctrines of religion pure and excellent; had he not a great number of followers in his life time? and is not his philoſophy to this day held in the higheſt veneration among the Chineſe and made the ſubject of their ſtudy and converſation? did not Pythagoras, according to the account given us in Juſtin, convert a whole city, by the power of philoſophy, from the moſt diſſolute effeminacy and luxury to the ſtricteſt temperance and frugality. When Cicero in the fifth of his Tuſculan diſputations affirms of Socrates; "primus philoſophiam devocavit e cœlo;" he immediately adds, "& in "urbibus conlocavit, & in *domus etiam* "introduxit:" he introduced it "*even* into "*families.*" and indeed where would have been the very ground of the accuſation brought againſt him by the magiſtracy of Athens, the accuſation of corrupting others by his philoſophy, if the people of that city had not ſhewn a reliſh for his inſtructions, and a capacity for being impreſſed by them? had no ſuch capacity diſcovered itſelf among them, inſtead of being the wiſeſt of men, as the oracle pronounced him to be, he would have acted like a fool in inculcating, as he did, the principles of his philoſophy upon all ſorts of men and perſiſting in this practice to the laſt. In this caſe, he might as well have preached, like St. Anthony, to the

the fiſhes. But if ſuch a capacity did really ſubſiſt even among the people in general of that city, we may from hence alone conclude, that theſe his inceſſant labours could not be without ſome good effect. How great was the ſucceſs of ſeveral very eminent philoſophers in the heathen world, when they undertook the office of founding and reforming ſtates? and can we believe that their philoſophy and its influence over the minds of thoſe they diſciplined, was of no aſſiſtance to them in the affair? Did philoſophers ſhut themſelves up in cloyſters? Nay, did not great numbers even of thoſe, who were not philoſophers by profeſſion, but engaged through life in the moſt public tranſactions of civil government; and who were perpetually converſant among mankind, philoſophize however at large? and is it to be thought, that there were not ſome at leaſt of thoſe, who were habitually employed in the inferior offices of ſociety who might acquire ſome ſmall tincture of their principles? "men "wanted not reaſon, as his lordſhip very "candidly allows, p. 6. before the coming "of CHRIST." and as it is undeniably evident, that ſince that period, many of thoſe, who in the eccleſiaſtic ſtyle are called the common people, and under that denomination doomed to an utter incapacity of ever being reaſoners in religion, can nevertheleſs think, inquire, and determine to very good purpoſe,

purpoſe, upon the ſubject. the caſe I imagine to have been, much the ſame in the days of ancient heatheniſm. " Religion, " his lordſhip tells us, was not the leaſt " part of inquiry" among the men of thoſe days. And we may, I preſume, conclude, that the inquiry was not wholly confined to philoſophers by profeſſion, and a few of the literati beſides, but that even many of thoſe, whoſe ſtated occupations were of another kind, laborious and ſervile it may be, had nevertheleſs a ſhare in them. And, if after all the number, who in theſe civilized nations had juſt notions of religion was comparatively very ſmall, as in truth it was, and theſe notions gained but little ground, is not the reaſon obvious? did not the civil magiſtrate and the prieſt then, as they do now, even in ſo many chriſtian countries, conſtantly oppoſe all reformations in religion. " muſt millions his lordſhip aſks p. 13. in " every age of the world be left in ignorance, " becauſe five or ſix among them may hap- " pen to extricate themſelves?" had reaſon, I anſwer, had that light of nature, which his lordſhip ſo much decries, as being utterly inſufficient for the purpoſes of religion, been ſuffered, in the polite and civilized nations of ancient heatheniſm, to have fair play, millions amongſt them would I queſtion not have " extricated themſelves" from the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtition and idolatry of

their

their country. It appears undeniably certain from hiſtory, that in England, in France, in Germany, the people would of their own accord have brought about a reformation from popery long before it was at laſt effected in this our nation, and in ſome parts of Germany, by the power of the civil magiſtrate, if this very magiſtrate had not himſelf prevented it. And I will venture to ſay, that they would have done it in a far better manner, than that, in which it was done at laſt by the intervention of his authority. And the caſe, we may well imagine, would have been the ſame in the ancient civilized heathen world, had not ſuperſtition and idolatry been willfully and deliberately ſupported in the ſeveral nations of it by the authority of the civil power, in oppoſition to the light of reaſon and nature. Are there " no prejudices, no prepoſſeſſions to complain " of" in ſuch a ſituation as this? what if philoſophers themſelves conformed to the publick modes of worſhip? it was not becauſe they *could* not *extricate* themſelves from the vulgar ſuperſtition, but becauſe they would not. Nor has it been univerſally true even of chriſtian biſhops, that they have in real life and conduct " extricated" themſelves from thoſe popular modes of religion, of the folly of which they themſelves have been very well convinced. What is it that " depreſſes the light of nature" and of the

the goſpel too, and that even in chriſtendom itſelf, but the introduction of human, civil authority in matters of religion, together with the hypocriſy, indolence, and irreſolution of the generality? but are we from hence to infer, that the goſpel is a feeble, "glim-" mering," inſufficient light? according to his lordſhip's reaſoning we are; and the "impotency" of the goſpel muſt ſtand altogether as clearly "confeſſed" as that of nature. For where is that "one country," nay where is that "one city," that now embraces "the pure principles of the goſpel?" Are the "paſſions of men" intirely "ſubdued in England and France" by means of it? is it even certain, that they are, as his lordſhip ſuppoſes, more effectually "ſubdued" in theſe chriſtian countries, than they are in China or other heathen countries, or than they were of old and in the days of paganiſm? It was thought by ſome eminent divines, near a century ago, that they were not. And it is to be feared that things are ſcarce altered for the better ſince. "This chroni-" cal diſeaſe" (wickedneſs) ſays, Dr. Burton, in his diſcourſes, vol. ii. p. 314. "has conti-" nued ſome thouſands of years and no cure "has been found: no; the great phyſician, "the healer of all our diſtempers, the bleſ-" ſed Jeſus himſelf has not effected this "cure: for I need not tell you, that the "chriſtian world has been and is more fil-

" led with deceit and force, rapine and tu-
" mult, contention and quarrel, than either
" the jewiſh, mahometan, or pagan." Biſhop Fowler likewiſe in that moſt excellent treatiſe of his, *the deſign of chriſtianity*, ſpeaking of the wickedneſs of chriſtians, expreſſes himſelf thus, p. 170, " nor can there be
" an eaſier taſk undertaken, than to ſhew,
" that not a few mere heathens have beha-
" ved themſelves incomparably better to-
" wards GOD, their neighbour, and them-
" ſelves, than do the generality of thoſe,
" that are called chriſtians. Nay, I fear, it
" would not be over-difficult to make it ap-
" pear, that the generality of thoſe, that
" never heard the goſpel, do behave them-
" ſelves in ſeveral reſpects better than they
" do." His lordſhip tells us, p. 172 of theſe *Diſcourſes*, vol. i. that " reaſon was
" once," tho' the particular period is not indeed aſſigned, " what the light of the goſ-
" pel is now, a ſufficient guide in religion." But he denies, that it was ſo in the days of pagan ſuperſtition and idolatry, and from this ſuperſtition and idolatry he derives his proof. And by the very ſame method of reaſoning we muſt, as far as I can find, conclude, that the goſpel is not " *now* a ſuf-
" ficient guide in religion" any more than reaſon or the light of nature was then or is at preſent. Indeed were his lordſhip's account of the ſtate of things under the diſpenſation of the goſpel ſtrictly true, this conſequence

might

might be in a great meaſure evaded. For he has been altogether as careful to conceal from the view of his readers the ignorance, ſuperſtition, and idolatry of chriſtendom, as to paint in the ſtrongeſt colors the ignorance, ſuperſtition, and idolatry of the heathen world. And it is to be wiſhed, that he had not, upon this occaſion, frequently made uſe of ſuch language, as cannot be juſtified by real fact or experience. Thus he tells us, p. 4. that " the goſpel has root-" ed out idolatry and ſuperſtition." Is not the expreſſion too ſtrong? might not the rejecter of chriſtianity make an advantage of it? a very extenſive and glorious efficacy of this kind did in truth accompany the goſpel of Chriſt, and ſuch, as conſidering the powers it had to contend with, amounts, I think, to an inconteſtable proof of its divinity and miraculous atteſtations. But that it has intirely and abſolutely *rooted out* idolatry, as his lordſhip's indeterminate and univerſal expreſſion implies, is very far from being true. Are there not to this day *whole nations* in the heathen world devoted to ſuperſtition and idolatry? and even with reſpect to the chriſtian world itſelf, did not the ſuperſtition and idolatry of ancient heatheniſm continue to be in ſome meaſure intermingled with chriſtianity for many ſucceeding centuries of the church? even at Rome itſelf, when beſieged in the fifth, by Alaric the Goth, were not ſacrifices offered by the pagan ſenators, to

the idol-gods, whom their anceſtors had been uſed to worſhip? nay, as low as the eighth, there was a decree made in an aſſembly of the Gallican church for the intire abolition of pagan ſuperſtitions. See Bower's ~~lives~~ Hiſtory of the popes, vol. i. p. 307, 8. and Dupin's compendious hiſtory of the church, cent. viii. c. v. p. 317. And had not popiſh idolatry long before that period crept into the chriſtian world? in like manner, "had you "a view, ſays his lordſhip, p. 15, 16. of the "diſputes, that ariſe even upon the princi-"ples of natural religion, it would ſhew you, "what the end will be: for the wanderings "of human reaſon are infinite. Under the "goſpel diſpenſation we have the *immutable* "word of GOD for the ſupport of our faith "and hope." Who might not conclude from hence, that there were never any *diſputes* at all among chriſtians; that the goſpel had put a final ſtop to the *wanderings of human reaſon*, and that its *immutability* conſiſted in an abſolute uniformity of faith prevailing throughout the whole chriſtian church, and to be traced throughout all the ſucceſſive ages of it? but "are theſe things ſo?" how eaſily, how ſafely may the rejecter of chriſtianity denie it? ſuch unguarded repreſentations as theſe, inſtead of adding any real ſtrength to the cauſe of chriſtianity, tend only to render truth itſelf ſuſpected. And yet again his lordſhip, ſpeaking of chriſtian countries,

tries, ſays, p. 146. " Go into our villages, " you will find there a firm perſuaſion of " the unity of GOD, who made heaven and " earth, and all things in them. The " meaneſt of the people will tell you, that " an honeſt heart is the *only* acceptable ſa- " crifice to GOD, and that there is *no* way to " pleaſe him, but by doing juſtly and righte- " ouſly." Surely he had forgot the doctrine of the trinity, the athanaſian creed, the thirty-nine articles, the doctrine of the utter inefficacy and unacceptableneſs of good works, without faith in Chriſt, without an imputed righteouſneſs or equivalent ſatisfaction made by the death of Chriſt for the ſins of mankind. He forgot ſurely the interceſſion of ſaints, of angels, and the doctrine of purgatory, prieſtly abſolution, extreme unction, and the ſacrifice of the maſs. I am apt to think that a ſenſible, attentive heathen obſerving the modes of worſhip prevalent both in popiſh and in proteſtant *villages*, and becoming acquainted with the doctrines generally inculcated and moſt eagerly contended for in the chriſtian world, would ſcarce believe that there was amongſt us, that " firm perſuaſion" ſpoken of by his lordſhip, of the unity of GOD and the acceptableneſs of good works *alone*. Nay, what pains are daily taken by many chriſtian writers, to confute the hereſy of thoſe, who contend for theſe very principles. In ſhort, that there is among

mong chriſtians a moſt ſad and deplorable apoſtacy from the purity and ſimplicity of the goſpel is too apparent to be denied. If therefore his lordſhip's argument, in proof of the abſolute inſufficiency of the light of reaſon and nature for anſwering the purpoſes of religion, and founded upon the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the heathen world, be really concluſive, it will be impoſſible, upon a view of the corruptions of the chriſtian ſyſtem prevailing both in popiſh and in proteſtant countries, to avoid this other concluſion, that chriſtianity likewiſe is at leaſt now become inſufficient, how effectual ſoever it may *once* have been, for anſwering theſe purpoſes.

But there is another very diſagreeable conſequence flowing from his lordſhip's method of reaſoning upon this ſubject; and that is, that admitting it to be juſt and well-founded, it will be impoſſible to account for the non-univerſality of the goſpel, without ſuppoſing, that thoſe, who have never enjoyed the light of it, are not in reality moral or accountable creatures. His lordſhip obſerves, p. 4. that "if nature be able to di-" rect us, it will be hard to juſtify the wiſ-" dom of GOD in giving us a revelation." But ſurely the argument would have been much more concluſive, had he ſaid; if nature be *not* able to direct us, it will be hard to juſtify the goodneſs of GOD in not having given the revelation to all. "Since all men"

" he

he tells us, p. 157. "live under the im-
" preſſion of natural conſcience, and the
" ſenſe of being accountable for their ac-
" tions, they all equally want direction."
And yet in the very ſame page he repreſents the generality of mankind as " incapable of" being the better " in matters of religion, by " the uſe of reaſon alone;" and at p. 160, expreſsly tell us, that " reaſoning will not " do the buſineſs." Reaſon and nature, we are told, likewiſe by his lordſhip in ſome paſſages that have been already quoted, " cannot pre-
" ſcribe a proper ſatisfaction for ſin; they
" cannot remedy the corruption, that has
" ſpread itſelf through the race of mankind;
" they cannot ſecure us from temptations."
How hard then, how extremely hard, the fate of the heathen world! *obliged* to with-ſtand temptations yet utterly *unable* to do it! ſupplied with no other method of ſalvation, than that, which they are " incapable of be-
" ing the better for!" deſtitute of that, which his lordſhip aſſures us " all men ſtand
" in need of to their well being!" " Muſt
" millions," we have found him asking,
" be left in ignorance, becauſe five or ſix
" among them may happen to extricate
" themſelves?" this he ſpeaks of as what would be very abſurd; and yet, accord-ing to the neceſſary conſequence of his own argument, this is the real conduct of providence in the caſe of *millions*. How much

much better to content ourſelves with ſuch plain and undeniable facts, as theſe; that the heathen world was actually in a ſtate of dreadful ignorance and corruption, before the goſpel was introduced, that, by means of this chriſtian religion, a great and glorious triumph was gained over vice and iniquity, ſuperſtition and idolatry, and that thoſe, who enjoy the light of it do in conſequence enjoy very great and eminent advantages for their improvement in virtue and goodneſs? how much better, I ſay, to reſt ſatisfied with theſe undeniable facts, than to involve ourſelves in thoſe inextricable difficulties, that muſt needs ariſe from affirming and vainly attempting to prove, that thoſe, who have not the light of chriſtianity, are without any ſufficient means of religion?

And indeed the vanity of this attempt is evident enough from the numerous inconſiſtencies and contradictions, which his lordſhip has fallen into upon the ſubject. When the neceſſity of the chriſtian revelation is to be proved, then reaſon is blind, dark, ſtupid, impotent, and unavailing to any one purpoſe of religion. But upon other occaſions ſhe can even in his lordſhip's opinion open her eyes and exert herſelf very vigorouſly and ſucceſsfully. Thus, as we have ſeen, when the excellency, not the neceſſity, of the chriſtian religion is to be proved, reaſon or "the voice of nature is the voice of GOD,

"no

" no revelation can intitle itſelf to be con-
" ſidered, if it contradicts one *plain* principle
" of natural religion." Now if men are able, when chriſtianity is propoſed to them, but yet before they are convinced of the truth of it, to deduce, from their own reaſon, ſuch juſt and worthy principles of religion, by which chriſtianity itſelf is to be tried, and a determination made as to its excellency and uſefulneſs, certainly they might by the uſe of their reaſon have deduced the ſame principles of religion from the light of nature, previouſly to their having the goſpel offered to their conſideration. " There is
" nothing" his lordſhip tells us, p. 176, " of
" more conſequence to the credit and au-
" thority of revelation than to reconcile it to
" the natural hopes and the natural expec-
" tations of mankind: and indeed the pro-
" miſes of the goſpel and the hopes of na-
" ture are founded upon the ſame common
" principles." Such is the language, when the excellency and uſefulneſs of the goſpel are to be proved; but when the abſolute neceſſity of it is the point in view, the tables are turned. Then it is, " nature
" and reaſon" nature and reaſon themſelves, not men's inattention to them, have miſguided all the " world into error and idolatry."
" How ſhall we ever truſt ourſelves," ſays his lordſhip, p. 263, 4. " in examining the
" dictates of nature, ſince the attempt has

" in all ages produced folly, ignorance, and " ſuperſtition." One would have thought, that it was not the making this attempt, that had produced theſe evils but the neglecting to make it. And indeed this is what his lordſhip himſelf does almoſt in the ſame breath affirm. " Had *nature*," ſays he, p. 264, " but done her part, men *could* not " have been impoſed upon by ſuch groſs and " palpable ſuperſtition: had the *natural* no- " tion of the deity been preſerved entire " and uncorrupted, no form of the heathen " worſhip could have ſtood before it." the goſpel, we are told in theſe *diſcourſes* p. 4, has " given us true notions of GOD and " of ourſelves, right conceptions of his ho- " lineſs and purity, and of the nature of " divine worſhip." But in the following page, he complains, that " now it ſeems, " this is all become pure natural religion." And does not his lordſhip himſelf make it to be ſo? or how is it, he can determine, that the notion given us in the goſpel concerning the deity, his perfections, and worſhip, is the " right and true" one, but by appealing to ſome prior diſcovery or revelation of theſe things? is it not this very notion, that he calls the " natural notion of " the deity," and which he ſuppoſes would have ſo effectually guarded the heathen world, had they attended to it, againſt " folly, ſuperſtition and idolatry." But can it

it in any ſenſe be ſaid to have been a *natural* notion, if they were utterly unable to deduce it from the light of nature? can that in any ſenſe be *natural* to men, which they are not able by any powers of *nature* to acquire? the truth of the matter then is, that his lordſhip has in theſe diſcourſes played the ſame artful game with reſpect to the light of nature, as has been ſo often played in relation to the goſpel by thoſe, who have oppoſed the truth of it. When they would diſcourſe for a while in a popular, inſinuating, ſtrain, then the goſpel, the chriſtian religion, and other phraſes of the like nature, ſtand for the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of chriſtianity, as they lie in the new-teſtament. But when they are inclined to depretiate the excellency and uſefulneſs of this very religion, then the goſpel is made to mean the moſt notorious corruptions of it. In like manner our author uſes the light of nature, natural religion, and the like phraſes, in directly oppoſite ſenſes, which he conveniently applies according to the purport of the argument he is upon. But not only is it true, that his lordſhip's arguments and obſervations frequently implie the ſufficiency of natural religion, ſuppoſing its dictates to be duly attended to; he likewiſe maintains, that the heathen world in general did actually ſo far attend to it, as really to enjoy by means of it ſufficient advantages for the practice of

their duty. " The great articles," he ſays, p. 110, " upon which all religion depends are " the nature of GOD, the immortality of the " ſoul, and the certainty of future rewards " and puniſhments in another life after this." Now there is not one of theſe articles, upon which his lordſhip does not ſuppoſe, as will appear in the following ſection, the generality of the heathen world to have had very competent information.

SECTION III.

" This," he tells us, p. 193, when ſpeaking of a future ſtate, " was the common belief of " the world derived from ſome common ſenſe " or principle of reaſon, before any philoſo- " pher had ſo much as thought of an abſtract- " ed reaſon for the proof of it." And what was this " common ſenſe or principle of reaſon," according to his lordſhip's own account, but the moral difference of things in conjunction with the perfections of the divine nature? " the poets," too, we are told in the ſame ſermon, " found men in poſſeſſion of the doctrine " of a future ſtate with rewards and puniſh- " ments for good and bad men;" and there like- " wiſe, p. 199, it is very juſtly obſerved, that " had it not been for philoſophy, there had " remained perhaps no footſteps of any un- " believers upon this great article." An article, the belief of which neceſſarily implies in it the idea of a moral difference between virtue

virtue and vice, of a moral governour of the univerſe, and, in ſhort, of every thing, upon which his lordſhip himſelf ſuppoſes religion to be eſſentially dependent. And it ought particularly to be remembered, that the belief of a future ſtate of rewards for good men neceſſarily includes in it the belief of GOD's forgiving mercy. So that if the heathens did in general even before the coming of our ſavior believe a future ſtate of rewards for good men, their belief of the divine placability muſt likewiſe before that period have been equally extenſive. They did not, they could not believe, that good men, even the beſt of good men, were intirely free from moral guilt. If therefore they believed, that the virtue of good men would be rewarded, they muſt of courſe have believed, that their ſins would be forgiven. "Reaſoning then at one time will not do the buſineſs." This error however is ſoon corrected; and we are told, that by mere dint of *reaſoning* only, from the moral perfections of the deity, and the eſſential moral difference between virtue and vice, not "five or ſix "in an age" only, but the heathen world in general infered the reality of a future ſtate: and this too without the help of philoſophy. Yet at other times a few choice philoſophers are repreſented as being the only perſons in the heathen world, who had it in their power to acquire any tolerable or ſufficient notions upon the ſubject of religion. But

if

if the belief of a future ſtate founded upon a moral difference in temper and actions, and upon the moral attributes of the ſovereign deity was in fact the common belief of mankind in the heathen world, as his lordſhip affirms, with what conſiſtency can he affirm likewiſe of theſe very perſons, that they had not, a very few excepted, ſufficient means of religion, or, that it had among them, as is aſſerted, p. 209, " hardly one ſound foot to " ſtand on?" what, not the moral difference of human actions, not the perfections of GOD, not, the immortality of the ſoul—— will not any, will not all theſe together, ſupply religion with one " ſound foot to ſtand " on?" are not theſe principles ſufficient to lead any man to true religion and virtue? is it not the very buſineſs of the goſpel to confirm theſe principles, and even of its peculiar doctrines to illuſtrate and enforce them? or where would have been its uſefulneſs, as a means of ſalvation, if this had not been the deſign and tendency of it? certainly then, thoſe, who were *in poſſeſſion* of theſe very principles, tho' wanting this additional confirmation and enforcement of them, can never, with any propriety, be repreſented as having been deſtitute of the helps and aſſiſtances neceſſary for their own ſalvàtion.

But tho' his lordſhip has done more juſtice to the heathen world, than many other chriſtian writers, in declaring, that the ſoul's immortality was the general and popular perſuaſion

perſuaſion of mankind, even before the appearance of our bleſſed ſavior, yet in the whole of what he has offered upon this ſubject, there is the ſame character of inconſiſtency, that is ſo apparent in thoſe other topics treated of in theſe *diſcourſes*, and which have been already conſidered. He ſeems indeed very ſuddenly to have regreted this free, tho' juſt, conceſſion, in behalf of the heathen world, and has therefore in that very ſermon where the paſſages, juſt now cited, occur, invented a difficulty for thoſe, whom he calls " the common people," " the gene-" rality," "the vulgar" of the heathen world, with relation to a future ſtate, which I believe never entered into their thoughts; a difficulty about the identity of the human perſon, and its continuance, after the diſſolution of the body. Upon this footing he tells us, p. 206. 209. that " the vulgar" in the heathen world were ſcarce " able to maintain their " hopes of immortality," and that " nature " taught it, in ſpite of ſenſe and experience." Strange ſort of unnatural nature this, that ran thus counter to ſenſe and experience both! to the ſame purpoſe his lordſhip tells us, p. 16, that " to them, who relie on na-" ture only it is not evident, nor can it be, " whether any future reward ſhall attend " their religious ſervice." And yet in ſome paſſages, but juſt now quoted, he had repreſented this as a doctrine not only certainly deducible

deducible from the light of nature, but actually infered by the bulk of mankind, before the introduction of the goſpel, from their natural notions of the divine perfections and government. Nay, he tells us, p. 17, 18, that " a man, who has the uſe of his rea- " ſon——*cannot help* concluding, that man " was made not merely to act a ſhort part " upon the ſtage of this world, but that there " is another and more laſting ſtate, to which " he bears relation," and that to ſuch a one " reflecting" upon his own being and ſituation and upon the perfections of his creator, " the preſumption, that there is another ſtate " after this, in which all men ſhall live, " grows ſtrong and almoſt irreſiſtible." And yet elſewhere, p. 185, we are told, that to " nature——all beyond the grave is—— " a land of doubt and uncertainty and that " when ſhe looks into it—ſhe has no ground, " whereon to reſt her foot." He goes on: " how different is the ſcene, which the goſ- " pel opens! there we *ſee* the heavenly Ca- " naan, the new Jeruſalem." And yet, in truth, the evidence, which the goſpel gives us of a future ſtate, in particular, by its ſeparate authority alone and independently of the proof reſulting from reaſon and nature, cannot poſſibly riſe higher than the evidence of its credibility in general. And can this be thought to excede in clearneſs and certainty our proof of thoſe divine perfections, from

which

which the reality of a future ſtate is ſo directly and immediately to be infered?

SECTION. IV.

The next topic, which we propoſed to make the ſubject of a few reflections, it being one, that his lordſhip has copiouſly enlarged upon, is the pardon of ſin. A doctrine which one would think to be extremely plain and intelligible in itſelf. But his lordſhip is very deſirous of having it paſs for a myſtery. And it muſt be owned, that by the help of certain *preſumptions* and *ſuppoſitions*, by the dexterous application of certain terms and phraſes, and by a very careful excluſion of ſuch ideas, as were neceſſary to the elucidation of the ſubject, he has not failed to give his attempt ſome appearance of plauſibility. Let us however try for once, whether we may not be at leaſt as ſucceſsful in unraveling a myſtery, as his lordſhip has been in making one. It is ſaid then, p. 44, 5, "of particular men it will not, I preſume, be denied, that they may ſin ſo far, and render themſelves ſo obnoxious to the juſtice of GOD, that it ſhall not be in the power of mere reaſon and nature to find an infallible method of atoning the juſtice of GOD, and conſequently, redeeming the ſinner from death." Now, if this may be the caſe, with reſpect to particular men, we allow with his lordſhip, ibid, that, "what

" may confeſſedly happen to one man or to " many, may poſſibly happen to all." But we are, I think, under no neceſſity of admitting his poſtulatum, or of allowing, that, *any one man can* " ſo far ſin " and render himſelf ſo obnoxious to the " juſtice of GOD, as that it ſhall not be in " the power of mere nature and reaſon to " find out an infallible method of atoning " *that* juſtice." Many have ſuppoſed the contrary, and that repentance is by *reaſon* and *nature* pointed out, as a certain method of recommending any man to the favor of GOD, whatever may have been his former offences. This they have believed to be a principle directly and immediately deducible, from the divine goodneſs and holineſs. Goodneſs naturally includes in it the idea of mercy and compaſſion. Perfect goodneſs therefore cannot but be accompanied with placability anſwering in the degree of it to this perfection of goodneſs, that is, with the higheſt poſſible placability of nature. And on this account his lordſhip's father not only aſſerts, that the " heathens," who lived before our ſavior's time, did believe GOD to be gracious and merciful to ſinners, but likewiſe, that they " had reaſon to do ſo." " Thoſe natural notions, he ſays, the hea- " thens had of GOD and all thoſe diſcove- " ries GOD had made of himſelf in the " works of creation and providence, did aſ- " ſure them, that GOD was very good, and

" it

" it is not poſſible to underſtand, what " goodneſs is, without pardoning grace." See his excellent diſcourſe concerning the knowledge of Chriſt, p. 31. Nay, his lordſhip himſelf, when not profeſſedly treating upon this ſubject, affirms, that the " temper " of mercy is natural to the Deity;" as may be ſeen in vol. iii. of his *diſcourſes*, p. 304. And tho' the eſſential holineſs of the deity muſt neceſſarily render wilful and preſumptuous ſinners obnoxious to the divine diſpleaſure, yet from this very attribute it follows likewiſe and with equal force of reaſon, that their departure from ſin, their acquiring habits of virtue and a likeneſs to this holineſs itſelf of the ſupreme deity muſt be the natural means of obtaining his favor, and of reverſing, that ſentence of condemnation and puniſhment, to which, during a ſtate of impenitence, all men muſt neceſſarily be expoſed. That a departure from ſin ſhould be the means of regaining the divine favor, ſeems to be a principle exactly as well-founded upon the immutable perfection, and purity of the divine nature, as, this other that the indulging corrupt and vitious habits ſhould be the ground of divine diſpleaſure. Nor do I find that his lordſhip has been able to advance any thing concluſively, in oppoſition to it. Let men " ſin ever ſo far," this will increaſe the difficulty of repentance, but it cannot deſtroy the acceptableneſs of it, when once it comes to be ſincere. His lordſhip indeed tells us, p. 45.

vol. i. that "the works of nature (*i.e.* a confor-
" mity to the moral law) tho' they may pre-
" vent a forfeiture, yet they cannot reverſe
" a forfeiture once incurred." What is this, but only denying in darker terms, the efficacy and ſufficiency of repentance towards obtaining the divine favor, without carrying in it the leaſt proof to the contrary? if GOD be really merciful and forgiving, and we muſt needs believe him to be infinitely merciful, or elſe we cannot believe him to be infinitely good; if GOD, I ſay then, be really, be infinitely merciful, why may not repentance be the condition or the means appointed in the original plan or order of his moral government, for " reverſing that forfeiture" of the divine favor, which by our ſins we may have incured? " Will you allow," his lordſhip aſks, ibid. and p. 46, that GOD may " freely forgive the ſins of the world, and " remit the puniſhment, and beſtow even " on ſinners the gift of eternal life? How " *myſterious* would even this grace be and " how far beyond the power of reaſon to " comprehend?". If by " forgiving the ſins " of the world" be meaned, forgiving them without repentance, if by beſtowing even on ſinners the gift of eternal life, be meaned the beſtowing it on unreclaimed and unreformed ſinners, it is not *allowed*. Neither would there be any *myſtery* in the caſe, if it were, becauſe by this conceſſion, we ſhould *plainly* impeach the divine holineſs, which

which cannot admit of receiving impenitent ſinners into favor; and even the goodneſs of the divine government, which cannot admit of beſtowing the perfection of happineſs upon the wicked and ungodly. But, if by "forgiving ſin" be meaned the pardon of it upon *repentance*, if by "beſtowing upon ſinners the gift of eternal life" be meaned the "beſtowing" this "gift" upon penitent ſinners, then will "this grace" be no otherwiſe "myſterious," or incomprehenſible, than the idea in general of GOD's perfect and infinite goodneſs. Tho' ſuch a goodneſs, is indeed too exuberant and too exalted for our finite underſtandings fully to comprehend the idea of it, we may yet have very ſufficient reaſon for believing, that it does eſſentially and immutably belong to the divine nature. But the pardon of ſin, conſidered in the view we have juſt been giving of it, cannot be "myſterious" as ſeeming to claſh with any of the divine perfections, becauſe it is in truth the natural reſult of them. "conſider, "ſays his lordſhip, p. 46, "the eſſential difference between good and evil, the natural beauty of one and the natural deformity of the other, compare them with "the eſſential holineſs of the deity, and "then tell me the ground, upon which he "reconciles himſelf to ſin, pities and forgives it, and decrees immortal glory for "the ſinner." Here again the idea of penitence

penitence is very carefully excluded. But let us ſuppoſe this to be the *ground* of pardon, and how does it follow, that GOD "reconciles himſelf to ſin?" the abſolute neceſſity of repentance, in order to pardon, implies the direct contrary. It ſuppoſes, that GOD cannot poſſibly be *reconciled* to ſin, or receive the ſinner into favor, till he loſes that character and becomes virtuous and good. Now "the eſſential difference "between good and evil, the natural beau-"ty of one and the natural deformity "of the other, compared with the eſſen-"tial holineſs of the deity," are ſo far from amounting to any reaſon againſt believing, that ſin will be thus pardoned upon repentance, that from theſe very principles it does, on the other hand, moſt certainly follow, that it will, on that condition, be remitted. For, if there be an "eſſential difference "between moral good and evil," there muſt be an "eſſential difference" likewiſe between penitence and impenitence. If there be a "natural beauty in virtue, and a natural de-"formity in vice," is there not for the ſame reaſon a "natural beauty" in repentance, and "a natural deformity" in perſevering vice? To ſuppoſe therefore that a repenting ſinner, notwithſtanding his repentance, muſt ſtill remain obnoxious to the divine diſpleaſure, is in effect either deſtroying this "eſſential "difference between virtue and vice," or

elſe

elſe ſuppoſing, that the ſupreme being pays no regard to it in his moral government, which is to denie his eſſential holineſs. His lordſhip goes on, ibid. " Or if this way pleaſe " you not, conſider his (GOD's) wiſdom, by " which he rules and governs the world, " and try, by all the notions you can frame " of wiſdom, whether it be not neceſſary " for the good government of the rational " world, that rewards and puniſhments " ſhould be divided with an equal hand to " virtue and vice; and then tell me, where " is the wiſdom of dropping all the puniſh- " ment due to ſin, and receiving ſinners not " only to pardon, but to glory?" here again we are obliged to aſk; who is it, that contends for " dropping all the puniſhment due to " ſin?" not the advocate for the efficacy of repentance towards obtaining the divine favor; becauſe; tho' he aſſerts, that it will be effectual, he ſuppoſes it at the ſame time, to be abſolutely neceſſary, to this end. He maintains, it is true, that repentance will moſt certainly avail towards reverſing any ſentence of puniſhment lying againſt a ſinner; but then he maintains too, that nothing but repentance can poſſibly have this effect; and that therefore the impenitent ſinner muſt neceſſarily remain liable to the puniſhment he has incured. Is this to repreſent the ſupreme being as " dropping all the puniſhment due to vice."

According

According to this doctrine he does indeed "receive the ſinner, not only to pardon, but "to glory." But mean by the ſinner, the repenting ſinner, ſuppoſe repentance to be the indiſpenſable condition of his being received "to pardon and to glory," this is ſo far from being contrary to the "equal diſtribu-"tion of rewards and puniſhments to virtue "and vice," that it does indeed directly follow from that very principle. For is not penitence virtue? is not impenitence vice? thus again his lordſhip aſks, p. 47, "is not "juſtice converſant in rewards and puniſh-"ments? is it not the eſſence of juſtice to "diſtribute both, where they are due? is "there not in nature and reaſon a connec-"tion between virtue, and reward, between "vice and puniſhment? how then comes "nature to be reverſed and the laws of "reaſon to be diſturbed? who "reverſes "nature?" who "diſturbs the laws of rea-"ſon?" none can poſſibly be farther from it, even according to this view of the matter, than the advocate for the efficacy of repentance towards obtaining pardon. "Juſtice "is converſant in rewards and puniſhments. "There is in nature and reaſon a connecti-"on between virtue and reward, between "vice and puniſhment." Now, I ſay, that on this very account the pardon of ſin upon repentance is perfectly conſonant and agreeable to the divine juſtice? This very

connection

connection does in the fulleſt manner eſtabliſh the doctrine. For what is repentance but real virtue, the habit of goodneſs? " But ſhould it really be, his lordſhip goes " on, p. 47, 8, as to human reaſon it ap- " pears, inconſiſtent with the wiſdom and " juſtice of GOD, ſo freely to pardon ſin, as " not to leave the marks of his diſpleaſure " upon it, or to remit the tranſgreſſions of " men, without vindicating in the face " of the whole creation, the honour of his " laws and government; in what a maze " muſt reaſon then be loſt in ſearching after " the means of reconcilement and redemp- " tion!" but where lies the difficulty? let us ſuppoſe, according to reaſon's dictates, the certain and univerſal efficacy of repentance towards obtaining the divine favor; but let us likewiſe conſider, that other concomitant and inſeparable principle equally the ſuggeſtion of reaſon, that nothing but repentance will avail to this purpoſe; and that therefore the obſtinate and impenitent offender muſt neceſſarily remain obnoxious to the wrath of GOD. Does ſuch a law as this, univerſally prevailing throughout the whole rational ſyſtem, carry in it " no " marks of the divine diſpleaſure againſt " ſin?" ſuch a law as this abſolutely irreverſible in any ſingle inſtance whatſoever? will not " the honor of GOD's" laws and government be clearly " vindicated in the face

" of the whole creation " by the puniſhment inflicted upon all the impenitent, upon all the perſevering wicked throughout the moral univerſe? his lordſhip however is ſo extremely fond of leading reaſon into a " maze," upon this occaſion, that he has I believe, taken his utmoſt pains to render her path inſcrutable: " for it is certain, he " tells us, p. 63, 4. according to all the natu- " ral notions of our mind, that it is juſt " for GOD to puniſh ſinners: tis likewiſe " certain, that GOD can do nothing, " but what is juſt; if therefore he for- " gives ſinners, and receives them to " mercy, and remits their puniſhment; " 'tis then certain, that 'tis juſt for GOD " in this circumſtance not to puniſh ſinners. " Now reaſon cannot comprehend, how " it ſhould, with reſpect to the ſame in- " dividual ſinners, be juſt to puniſh, and " juſt not to puniſh them. If it be not juſt " to puniſh ſinners, there wants no recon- " cilement for ſinners; and if it be not " juſt not to puniſh them no reconcile- " ment can be had, for it is contrary to " the nature of GOD to do what is not juſt. " The ſame argument lies from all the at- " tributes of the deity, which are at all " concerned in the redemption of mankind: " his wiſdom and holineſs and even his " mercy are as indiſcernible as his juſtice. " Now try how far reaſon can go towards

" diſcovering

" diſcovering the means of reconcilement:
" lay down firſt theſe certain and allowed
" principles; that it is juſt for GOD to pu-
" niſh ſinners—that GOD can do nothing
" but what is juſt: And try how you can
" come at the other concluſion, which muſt
" be the foundation of a ſinner's reconcile-
" ment to GOD; namely, that it is juſt for
" GOD not to puniſh ſinners, and righteous
" in him to receive them to favour." Here we have a *maze* indeed! who would think how eaſily and ſafely we may be conducted out of it, by the help only of a ſingle word; which therefore his lordſhip in forming this inextricable difficulty for human reaſon, very prudently kept out of the way. The ſingle word I mean is, penitence. By the aid of which alone " reaſon" will very eaſily "comprehend," how it may even "with
" reſpect to the ſame individual ſinner, be
" juſt to puniſh him, and juſt not to puniſh
" him." If he remains a ſinner and perſiſts in his impenitence, then, according to all that we know of the eſtabliſhed meaſures of the divine government, it will be juſt to puniſh him. Nevertheleſs this "individual" ſinner, of whom indeed it will be eternally true, that he once was a ſinner, may in time acquire a total change of character, ſo as no longer to be, in a moral eſtimation, the ſame perſon he was before. And therefore, if he was before obnoxious to future puniſhment, he muſt by this change of character become

the natural object of divine mercy and favor. In ſhort, by the help of this clue, reaſon meets with no difficulty at all in admiting both the propoſitions, which his lordſhip, in order, if poſſible, to confound her, has ſo dexterouſly played againſt one another. "It is juſt in GOD to puniſh ſinners," ſo long as they remain impenitent; but "it is juſt in GOD," it is no way inconſiſtent with his juſtice; nay more, it is moſt exactly conſonant and agreeable to the laws of his moral government, the laws, which his own goodneſs and wiſdom originally eſtabliſhed, that, whenever a ſinner doth really repent and become reformed, his puniſhment ſhould be remited. His lordſhip indeed ſeems to think, that, in order to our obtaining the pardon of ſin, we muſt by ſome means or another be furniſhed with a claim to it from the ſupreme deity upon a ground of juſtice, in the ſame manner, that one man may claim certain ſervices or benefits from another for the ſake of ſomething, that had been previouſly done by him on the others account, and by which he had ſtrictly merited or acquired a right to thoſe ſervices or benefits. This is an idea of juſtice very well ſuited to the dealings of man with man, but cannot with the leaſt propriety be applied to any bleſſings, that are to be beſtowed upon creatures by their ſupreme creator? In theſe very diſcourſes it is repreſented, p. 56. as what would be extremely arrogant in any,

and

and undoubtedly it would be ſo, to think of " *appearing* before GOD and *demanding* life " and immortality, as due from his juſtice " and equity, which *they* will not accept " as a gift from his grace and mercy." And yet his lordſhip himſelf does, ſo far as I am able to diſcern, ground our expectation of pardon and hope of future happineſs upon this very plea of juſtice. " The terms of " the goſpel, he tells us, p. 185. convey to " true penitents, not only hope, but a claim " to pardon." " Our Savior, he obſerves, p. " 182. has told us that, when we have done " our beſt, we muſt ſtill own, that *we are* " *unprofitable ſervants:* and if we reflect, " that all our natural powers are the gift of " GOD, and conſequently, our beſt ſervices " are but a debt paid to the donor: if we " conſider, that in all we do there is no profit " to the moſt high, that his power and ma- " jeſty are not exalted by our ſervice, nor " leſſened by our neglect, we ſhall find, that " our own reaſon teaches us the ſame " leſſon; and that, when we confeſs our- " ſelves unprofitable ſervants, we give " greater evidence of our underſtanding than " of our humility. And if this be truly " the caſe, what are the claims of natural " religion? are they not the claims of un- " profitable ſervants? the claims of thoſe to " whom nothing is due?" Now that this " is truly the caſe" cannot be denied. But then, if on this account natural religion can give

give us no hope of pardon and future happineſs, ſo neither can the goſpel. "We are "unprofitable ſervants to GOD:" "what "then, ſays his lordſhip, are the claims "of natural religion?" What then I aſk too, and ſurely with equal reaſon, are the claims of the goſpel? has the goſpel enabled us to do any thing, that can be "profitable "to GOD?" or can it be ſaid of any thing that Chriſt has done or ſuffered, any more than of any thing, that we have done or ſuffered ourſelves, that it has been "profi-"table to the moſt high?" If therefore it be any juſt reaſon againſt our expecting either the pardon of ſin, or the enjoyment of an immortal felicity, upon the footing of natural religion, that it does not furniſh us with any claim to theſe bleſſings, as a matter of right and equity, or as a return for ſervices done to the almighty, the reaſon is equally ſtrong againſt our entertaining any ſuch expectation under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, or on account of any thing tranſacted by our bleſſed ſavivior in our behalf; and we muſt be abſolutely without redreſs. The free grace of GOD alone is and neceſſarily muſt be the foundation of pardon, hope and happineſs with reſpect to every individual of human kind; and repentance is the means, by which, according to the eſtabliſhed law of his moral government, we become the proper objects of it. But it is inſiſted upon,

p. 178,

p. 178, " that natural religion could not be " originally founded in the conſideration of " man's being a ſinner, and in the expecta- " tion of pardon." Let this allegation be examined. And in doing it we will allow, if his lordſhip pleaſes, "that natural religion could not be "originally *founded* in the conſideration " of man's being a ſinner, and in the expec- " tation of pardon;" becauſe this manner of expreſſion may ſeem to implie, that theſe were the ſole foundations of it. But that natural religion did originally " *include* in it" the " conſideration of man's being a ſinner, and the expectation of pardon," we will venture to affirm. For was not man originally made imperfect, liable to fall and capable of ſinning? if not, how came he to ſin? or where would have been the poſſibility of his falling? now this original imperfection of the human frame, and conſequent liableneſs in man to offend, muſt have been as well known to the ſupreme deity at the creation of man, as they have ever been ſince that period. To ſuppoſe therefore that an abſolute and ſinleſs obedience, without the encouraging hope of pardon upon repentance, was by the original law of nature enacted, as the neceſſary and indiſpenſable condition of human happineſs in a future life, is to repreſent the ſupreme being, as giving man a law directly contrary to his original make; it is to repreſent

ſent him as expecting, and that under the ſevereſt penalties, perfect obedience from an imperfect creature. And is this to be believed of ſovereign, infinite goodneſs? Is not this infinite goodneſs an undoubted and immutable attribute of the divine nature? and muſt not clemency have been from all eternity an eſſential part of it? GOD therefore, when he firſt made man, muſt have been as much diſpoſed to pardon ſin upon repentance, as we can poſſibly believe him to have been ſince. If then natural religion be founded, as it certainly muſt be, upon the perfections of GOD and the nature of man, it muſt *originally* include in it the hope of pardon upon repentance. "If the "laws of nature, we are told, p. 180, are "the precepts of natural religion, as with- "out all doubt they are, it follows, that "natural religion can be nothing elſe, but "obedience to the laws of nature, and "conſequently the genuine hopes of natu- "ral religion muſt be founded in obedi- "ence." That is, according to the intended ſenſe of our author, in perfect, ſinleſs obedience,—"natural religion *nothing elſe*, "but obedience to the laws of nature!" or as it is elſewhere expreſſed, p. 54, 55. "*notbing* but a rule of living well"—— "*barely* a rule of life"——a very barren deſcription of it truly! What! does natural religion include in it no diſcovery of the divine perfections

perfections? are there no encouragements to obedience, no comforts, no joys founded upon theſe perfections belonging to it? is not the diſcovery of GOD's pure, eſſential, infinite goodneſs a part of natural religion? muſt not then a dependance upon divine mercy, on the ſuppoſition of our having violated the laws of his moral government, to which in conſequence of the original imperfection of our natures, we muſt needs be liable, and our ſincere repentance, and return to the practiſe of our duty make a part of the "genuine hopes of nature?" but "all laws, it is ſaid, p. 180, are made "to be obeyed." Is not the indiſpenſable neceſſity of repentance, after the violation of the divine laws, in order to our being reinſtated in the divine favor, perfectly conſonant to this maxim? is it not directly founded upon it? but "no prince, it is added, "ibid. was ever ſo abſurd as to make laws "with this view, that his ſubjects might "break them, and he ſhew his goodneſs in "pardoning their tranſgreſſions, and yet this "muſt have been the ſcheme of providence, "if natural religion was nothing elſe, from "the beginning but an expectation of par-"don for ſin." Not to inquire what adverſary his lordſhip is here contending with, or who they are, that have ever affirmed it to be "no-"thing elſe;" with reſpect to the argument itſelf, we allow it to be true, that "no prince "ever made laws on purpoſe, that they might be

" broken." But does it at all follow from hence, that he cannot poſſibly upon any condition or in any circumſtances whatſoever, exerciſe his clemency towards thoſe, who may in proceſs of time actually infringe them? does making laws neceſſarily render a prince implacable? does it abſolutely deprive him of all liberty to ſhew mercy and compaſſion? I believe "no prince" was ever ſo abſurd as to imagine this. No father ever gives his precepts or directions to his children " with a " view," that they may act in contradiction to them, " and he ſhew his goodneſs in par- " doning their tranſgreſſions." But does it from hence follow, that he will not, nay, that he ought not to " ſhew his goodneſs in " pardoning" them, when they really have acted contrary to his will and humbly confeſs their folly? is he to have no clemency, becauſe his children are bound to obey him? is he from the very moment his orders are given out to renounce the very idea of mercy? and is not a good prince the father of his people, and GOD the father of all? Mr. Locke indeed tells us in his reaſonableneſs of chriſtianity, that " the law " of works makes no allowance for failing " on any occaſion;" that " the law of works " is that law, which requires perfect obedi- " ence, without any remiſſion or abate- " ment: ſo that by that law, a man cannot " be juſt or juſtified without an exact per- " formance of every tittle." And this he farther

farther tells us is "ſuch a law as the purity "of GOD's nature required and muſt be the "law of ſuch a creature as man, unleſs "GOD would have made him a rational "creature, and not required him to have "lived by the law of reaſon, but would "have countenanced in him irregularity "and diſobedience to that light, which "he had, and that rule, which was ſuit-"able to his nature, which would have "been to have authorized confuſion, diſ-"order and wickedneſs in his creatures.— "And if rational creatures will not live "up to the rule of their reaſon, who ſhall "excuſe them? if you will admit them to "forſake reaſon in one point, why not in "another? where will you ſtop? to diſ-"obey GOD in any part of his commands "(and 'tis he, that commands what rea-"ſon does) is direct rebellion, which if "diſpenſed with in any point, government "and order are at an end, and there can "be no bounds ſet to the lawleſs exorbitan-"cy of unconfined men." See p. 14, p. 16, p. 20, of that book. But did Mr. Locke, or does his lordſhip conſider, where ſuch reaſoning as this muſt neceſſarily terminate? it terminates at once in the utter overthrow of the goſpel, and the final ruin of the whole human race? it repreſents the chriſtian religion as being a ſcheme directly cal-

culated to promote amongſt mankind all manner of *wickedneſs* and vice, of *diſobedience* and rebellion againſt GOD their maker. According to theſe celebrated divines, a law, a religious diſpenſation or moral conſtitution, that carries in it any encouragement to repentance, in the caſe of thoſe, who ſhall violate and tranſgreſs its precepts, a law, that does not rigorouſly and abſolutely inſiſt upon a perfect obſervance of its rules, in order to the finding favor and acceptance with GOD, and deliver over to irremediable puniſhment, thoſe, who are the ſubjects of it, for the very firſt offence, would be calculated to promote an utter diſregard to its rules, the moſt daring and preſumptous neglect of them. And yet according to them likewiſe, the goſpel is this very law, preciſely ſuch a diſpenſation. "The goſpel, ſays our learned biſhop, con-"veys to true penitents, not only hope, "but a claim to pardon." And "the law "of faith," that is of the goſpel, ſays Mr. Locke, ibid. p. 20, "is allowed to ſup-"ply the defect of full obedience." Was the deity then more inclined to encourage, to *excuſe*, to *diſpenſe with* vice at the time, when the goſpel was publiſhed, than at the period, when man was created? or are encouragements to the penitent given in the goſpel-diſpenſation leſs calculated to promote "lawleſs exorbitancy" to deſtroy all

" all moral government and order" than the like encouragements given by the light of nature? the obvious anſwer to theſe queſtions may ſuffice to convince us, that the diſtinction ſo much inſiſted upon between " a covenant of works" and a " covenant " of grace," is a merely chimerical one, a diſtinction, for which there is not the leaſt foundation in the nature either of GOD or of man. Man was always an imperfect creature. And if his creator was always a perfect being, it muſt from hence neceſſarily follow, that man was never under any moral conſtitution, which did not make gracious allowances for the frailty of his nature, and for thoſe tranſgreſſions of the divine will, of which he ſhould ſincerely repent. The law of nature has from the begining been a law of works, or of moral righteouſneſs; but then it has from the begining too been a law of grace. Otherwiſe it would not have been adapted to the originally frail and imperfect nature of man. So that " a covenant of works," and " a covenant of grace" are not two diſtinct covenants, but they are different views amounting together to a compleat idea or notion, of that one covenant, which did originally ſubſiſt with relation to man, which always did, and always will contain in it the terms of his final acceptance with GOD his maker. And if theſe terms are

ſuch

ſuch as are agreeable to the nature of God, as they ſurely muſt, it can be no argument againſt the acceptableneſs of repentance, tho' it has been ſometimes urged as ſuch, that it does not and cannot amount to abſolute innocence. Innocence, abſolute innocence, or ſinleſs obedience, could not, conſidering the imperfect nature of man, in conjunction with the perfect goodneſs of the deity, have been even originally the indiſpenſable condition of our finding favor with God. certainly then it cannot become ſo in conſequence of our having actually violated his laws. But, if after all, it was indeed inconſiſtent with the divine perfections to make any gracious allowance in the law of nature for ſuch deviations from it, as ſhould be ſincerely repented of, it muſt be equally inconſiſtent with thoſe perfections, to make any ſuch allowance under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, or by any other religious inſtitution whatſoever: and thus muſt our caſe become abſolutely deſperate and remedileſs. Either no ſuch gracious terms as theſe can ever be offered to mankind, or if they are offered by any one aſſuming the character of a divine prophet, we muſt be obliged according to the reaſoning of theſe learned writers upon the ſubject of natural religion, to reject them as being contrary to the immutable perfections of the divine nature, and to look upon the prophet as an impoſtor.

SECTION V.

Thus have we conſidered all that his lordſhip has advanced, when profeſſedly treating upon this ſubject, the pardon of ſin, in the firſt volume of his diſcourſes. But, as he has occaſionally recured to it in his ſecond, we ſhall here ſubjoin a remark or two upon theſe incidental paſſages. He obſerves then, p. 320, that, " if we argue, that in- " finite juſtice muſt neceſſarily puniſh all " iniquity; that infinite mercy muſt extend " to all offences, we get into a maze in " which we may wander for ever, without " finding any way to get out." To which, after what has been ſo largely offered already, we ſhall only replie, in plain and direct terms, and without being in any *maze* at all; that infinite juſtice " *only* puniſhes *ini-* " *quity*" not repented of, and that infinite mercy pardons *only* the ſins of the truly penitent. Again it is obſerved, p. 313 that " " theſe fears proceeding from guilt are both " natural and rational; it is impoſſible there- " fore, that nature and reaſon ſhould afford " any aſſiſtance or ſufficient remedy againſt " theſe terrors, unleſs we ſuppoſe reaſon " and nature to be made up of contradic- " tions." But why ſo? may not theſe fears be natural, while the guilt remains, and yet a departure from ſin be the natural remedie for them? has the goſpel removed theſe fears of guilt?

guilt? Nay is it not deſigned to excite them, ſo long as men continue guilty and impenitent? but, does it therefore follow, that it cannot *poſſibly* afford any remedie for them? there are certain diſtempers of the body, which in ſuch and ſuch circumſtances are *naturally* contracted, for which however *nature* ſupplies us with a remedie. Nothing indeed is eaſier to apprehend, than, that one thing may be *natural and rational* in one circumſtance, and the direct contrary ſo in another. Thus *fear and terror* are *natural and rational* in a ſtate of guilt, hope and joy in a ſtate of repentance. But "all who are wil-"ling," ſays his lordſhip. p. 323, 4 "to re-"form merely thro' the fears and terrors of "guilt are without remedy; which ſhews, "that the far greater number of ſinners are "in a helpleſs ſtate under natural religion." How can it *ſhew this*, unleſs we maintain, that natural religion ſupplies men with no other motives to repentance, than theſe comparatively low, and mercenary ones, or elſe, that it is one peculiarity of the goſpel, that repentance will be accepted even tho' founded upon theſe ſelfiſh principles alone? but, if natural religion did actually furniſh men with thoſe more ingenuous motives to repentance, which ariſe from the hatred of ſin, and the love of GOD, and if the goſpel, abſolutely inſiſts upon a repentance flowing from ſuch motives as theſe, in order to man's acceptance in the ſight of GOD, it ſeems to

be

be equally true under the diſpenſation of the goſpel as under that of natural religion, that " all, who are willing to reform merely thro' " the fears and terrors of guilt" are, ſo long as they continue in this diſpoſition, " without " remedie." Again it is alledged, p. 325. that " no man will affirm, that reaſon teaches us " to think GOD and his law ſatisfied by ſin- " ning and then repenting. We are not to " conduct our lives by this rule. Why then " muſt we needs be judged by this rule; " eſpecially when it is a confeſſed maxim, " that the rule of judgment and the rule of " life ought to be the ſame." I believe indeed, that no man will affirm that " GOD " and his law are ſatisfied by ſinning and re- " penting" both. But, when ſin, has been actually commited, where will be the harm, or where the abſurdity of " affirming," that repentance may, according to the merciful oeconomy of GOD's moral government, " ſatisfie" the divine laws? men may abuſe this doctrine of the efficacy of repentance, but, I think, not ſo eaſily as that other, which his lordſhip would ſubſtitute in the room of it. " It may per- " haps be thought," ſays his Lordſhip, p. 325, 6. " that the goodneſs of GOD conſidered, " and the weakneſs and frailty of man, and " his inability to pay a punctual obedience " in all things to the law of reaſon, it is a " reaſonable conſtruction upon the law of

" nature to expect pardon for our faults and
" omiſſions, and that the very terms of this
" obedience carry this equitable conſtruction
" in them. This to me, he adds, ſeems
" to be the moſt material thing to be ſaid
" upon the ſubject; and I readily allow it.
" But the moſt that can be made of it
" is, that we ſhall be intitled to equitable
" allowances in the courſe of an imperfect
" obedience. But it does not come up to
" the caſe of ſuch, who under all theſe al-
" lowances fall from their obedience and
" forfeit the favour of GOD. But theſe are
" the perſons for whom we ſeek relief."
And may we not find it too in the neceſſary conſequence of his lordſhip's conceſſion? may not an imperfect human creature, unhappily fallen from his original innocency, by repentance acquire as great a degree of virtue, as he did or even could have poſſeſſed before his degeneracy? And muſt not the ſame degree of virtue, be at all times and in every inſtance equally acceptable to an immutable and abſolutely perfect deity? We are told however, p. 326. that " it does not
" appear, that natural religion has any cer-
" tain cure for the terrors of guilt, becauſe
" the title by obedience being forefeited,
" there are no certain principles of reaſon,
" from which we can conclude, how far
" and in what inſtances the mercy of GOD
" will extend, becauſe we can have no aſ-

" ſurance

" ſurance of ourſelves, that our ſorrow is " ſuch, and our reſolutions for amendment " ſuch, as may deſerve mercy; and laſtly " becauſe this whole matter, whatever there " be in it, is built upon reaſons and ſpe- " culations too exact and too refined to " be of common uſe to mankind." In anſwer to the firſt of theſe difficulties, we hope, it has been already made to appear, that there are " certain principles of " reaſon, from which *to* conclude, that " the mercy of GOD will extend itſelf " to *every* inſtance of ſincere repentance," how aggravated ſoever may have been the preceeding apoſtacy. In anſwer to the ſecond we obſerve, that under the diſpenſation of the goſpel we are altogether as liable, as under that of natural religion alone, to doubts and jealouſies, concerning the ſincerity of our own repentance and reſolutions for amendment. The objection therefore would hold equally good againſt the goſpel as " having *no certain cure for* " the terrors of guilt," unleſs it be ſuppoſed, that under that of the goſpel ſincerity is of no account or ſignificancy towards our obtaining the divine forgiveneſs. And as to the laſt-mentioned difficulty, after what has been already ſo particularly inſiſted upon in relation to this argument, we may, it is preſumed, venture to affirm, that the doctrine of the efficacy of re-

pentance towards enſuring the remiſſion of our ſins is founded upon principles as clear, and as obvious to the capacity of mankind, as thoſe, from which that of a future ſtate is infered, and from which his lordſhip ſuppoſes the generality of mankind to have deduced it, even without the aſſiſtance of the goſpel-inſtitution. But there is another objection relating to this ſubject and advanced likewiſe in this ſecond volume of diſcourſes, which is by no means to be paſſed over. It is in ſhort no other than this, that repentance has ſomething in it too *philoſophical* to be expected from the bulk of mankind, and that it cannot therefore be ſuppoſed to be the univerſal means of reconciling ſinners to an offended deity. But take it, kind reader, if you pleaſe, in the very words of his lordſhip. "The generality of mankind, he ſays, p. "322. are far from being philoſophers, "or able to look back upon their iniquities "with ſo much calmneſs and *judgment* as "is *neceſſary* to create a juſt abhorrence "of vice, and to produce a real change "in the affections of the heart, and to "reſtore the pure love of GOD and of "virtue, where vice and luſt have been "long predominant." Had the author of theſe diſcourſes lived at the time of the firſt eſtabliſhment and publication of the goſpel, how happily, might he have corrected the

the plan of it! for, having with ſo much concern and tenderneſs for the welfare of mankind both here and hereafter, communicated this diſcovery to the preſent age, he would not ſurely have failed to inform our bleſſed ſavior and his apoſtles of the abſurdity of inculcating the duty of repentance, as they did, upon the "multitude," upon the *generality of mankind*, who are, it ſeems, ſo *far from being philoſophers*, as to be utterly uncapable of performing it. What welcome news to the vitious and abandoned, who in general have no ſmall degree of averſion to the difficulties of repentance, to be told that they have not *judgment* enough to ſet about it! Nay, how readily will ſuch allow themſelves to be thus excuſed from the *neceſſity* of it, tho' at the expence of all the *philoſophy* they may have ever pretended to!

SECTION VI.

Another ſubject, upon which we propoſed to make a few reflections, ſo far as relates to the manner in which it has been treated in theſe diſcourſes, is the grace of the redeemer. And we cannot but ſay, that ſuch a view is here given of it, as is calculated very highly to derogate from the unrivaled goodneſs of the one, ſupreme and eternal

eternal deity. His Lordſhip frequently takes occaſion to ſpeak of Chriſt, as being the creator of the world, and ſometimes juſtly repreſents his creation of it as being the effect of a power communicated to him by the father, and exerted under his authority, ſee p. 73, 4, 5. vol. i. At other times he ſeems willing to conceal this diſtinction, ſpeaking of Chriſt's creation of the world by a delegated authority in the very ſame phraſe and language, he makes uſe of, when ſpeaking of the creating power and goodneſs of the father; as if they were preciſely one and the ſame being: or if different in perſon, equal however in "power, and glory." "The "relation, he ſays, p. 76, of Chriſt to man-"kind as creator and governor conſidered, "the work of redemption could not pro-"perly have been undertaken by any o-"ther hand." Again, p. 77. he expreſſes himſelf thus "in the daily ſervice of our "church we praiſe GOD for creating and "preſerving us, but above all for his ineſ-"timable love in the redemption, which is "very conſiſtent with reſpect to *one* great "benefactor, who both made us and re-"deemed us. But had any *other* hand re-"deemed us, ſuch expreſſion of gratitude "to him would have reflected diſhonor "upon the creator." Once more, having quoted p. 76. John v. 25, 26, *for as the father hath life in himſelf, ſo has he given to the ſon*

ſon to have life in himſelf, he paraphraſes it in manifeſt diminution of the father's ſupremacy, who alone poſſeſſes independently and ſelf-originately creating power, and in direct contradiction to the very letter of the text itſelf. " If, ſays he, the ſon has life in him-
" ſelf, *even as the father has life* in himſelf;
" if he is really endued with power, to which
" all nature ſubmits and obeys, a power ſuf-
" ficient for the creation of the world at
" firſt, and for the preſervation ever ſince;
" we have reaſon to conclude, that he is now
" as able to reſtore life, as he was at firſt to
" give it." Does the text ſay, that " the
" ſon has life in himſelf, *even* as the father
" has life in himſelf?" does it not plainly aſſert the contrary? does it not ſay of the life, which " the ſon has in himſelf," that it was *given* him of the father? does it ſay, that " the
" life, which the father has in himſelf," was *given* him either by the ſon or by any other being? But tho' his lordſhip frequently ſpeaks both of GOD and of Chriſt, as having created the world, yet how much greater the confidence, which he ſuppoſes may be placed by mankind, in our bleſſed ſavior, on account of his having created them, than, he will allow, can naturally and reaſonably be founded in that relation, which we ſtand in to the father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt as our creator. thus he obſerves, p. 81, 2 that " when
" we view the ſad condition of mankind,

" the

" the ſin, folly and miſery, which are in the
" world; and then turn to contemplate the
" perfections, the wiſdom, and the good-
" neſs of him, who made us; nature raiſes
" *ſome* hopes in us, that this confuſion will
" ſome day find a remedy, and ourſelves a
" releaſe from the goodneſs and wiſdom of
" him, who formed us." He faintly adds,
" I blame not theſe hopes, they are juſt,
" they are natural:" and then proceeds in
this pathetic ſtrain. " But if nature had the
" knowledge of the ſon of GOD, and could
" diſcover that the world was made and up-
" held by his power, that we are his im-
" mediate creatures and ſubjects, would it
" not be *altogether as natural* to found ſome
" hopes upon this relation? ſhould we not
" be willing to believe, that this great per-
" ſon would have ſome compaſſion upon the
" work of his own hands? ſhould we not
" hope to find in him at leaſt an interceſſor
" on our behalf, an *advocate with the father*?
" ſhould we not be inclined to recommend
" to him all our pleas, to put all our intereſt
" into his hands, truſting that he could not
" want bowels of affection towards the crea-
" tures, whom he formed in his own image
" and likeneſs? I think this would be but
" *natural*; and what more does the goſpel
" require of us? it has diſcovered to us this
" relation between Chriſt and the world, be-
" tween Chriſt and the church, and requires

" from

" from us ſuch hope and faith, and ſuch " obedience as *naturally* flow from this " relation; and could it poſſibly require " leſs? would it not be abſurd to tell us, " that Chriſt is lord of the world, that is, " and of that which is to come, and not " to require us to have hope and con- " fidence in him? would it not be abſurd " to tell us, that he is the lord of life " and glory, and bid us expect life and " glory, through any other hand than his? " Would it not be abſurd to tell us, that " all judgement is committed to the ſon, " and yet no obedience due to him? or " that GOD has appointed him to be head " over all and yet no honour to be paid " him?" Such is the unbounded confidence, which we are, it ſeems, to place in Chriſt, on account of his being our creator, tho' his ſtanding in that relation is founded only upon a derived power and delegated authority; whilſt with reſpect to the ſupreme and underived ſource of all being, the father of the univerſe himſelf, " nature, " we are told, can only raiſe *ſome* hopes, " and that theſe hopes are only *not* to be " *blamed*." When the goodneſs of this ſupreme creator as made known to us by the light of nature, is the topic, then, p. 185, " nature has her hopes and fears;" and " all beyond the grave is a land of doubt " and uncertainty." But, when the crea-

ting power of Chriſt is the ſubject, then all is love and compaſſion on his part, truſt and confidence, joy and triumph on ours. Thus, tho' he tells us, p. 85, that "all "nature proclaims the being and the power "of GOD, and the viſible things of the "creation declare in every language of "the world, the wiſdom and goodneſs "of him, who made them;" yet in a page or two preceding it is aſſerted, that "all nature ſeems to frown on us, and to "threaten death and deſtruction." So little hope or reliance can we, according to his lordſhip, preſume to build upon the cleareſt diſcoveries of GOD's creating goodneſs, power and wiſdom. But how different the ſtyle, when the redeemer's love is to be pointed out, as the far ſafer object of our truſt and confidence! we may well believe, it is obſerved, p. 83, "he has redeemed us, ſince p. 83. "we know he made us." Tho' "nature" in which GOD the father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt is diſcovered to us, "ſeems to frown "upon us, threatning death and deſtruction," yet, it is immediately added, "our hope "is ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, being placed "in him, who is *able to ſubdue all things to* "*himſelf*;" that is, in Chriſt. His lordſhip indeed directly affirms, p. 303, that, "thoſe, "who acknowledge the author of nature "to be a good being, have *much more reaſon* "to acknowledge the author of the chriſtian

"miracles

" miracles to be a good being." This ſeems too ſtrongly to inſinuate, that we have greater proofs of the goodneſs of Chriſt than of GOD, and have reaſon to look upon him as a better being. Or if by theſe ambiguous terms it was deſigned to ſuggeſt, that the chriſtian miracles afford a greater proof of the divine goodneſs, than the united works of nature and the œconomy of providence thro' all the ſucceſſive ages and in every part of the world, is there the leaſt appearance of propriety in the obſervation? but be this as it will, it is remarkable, that his lordſhip, p. 117, in anſwer to a difficulty, which he ſuppoſes ſome to urge on account of our not having a " clear inſight into the myſteries " of religion," expreſſes himſelf thus: " if " you will preſs this argument any farther, " you muſt plead the cauſe with GOD " and not with Chriſt. He (Chriſt) has " taught you all, that you were capable " of knowing; and you muſt inquire of " GOD, why he *made* you no better, and " no wiſer." And why not of Chriſt, " ſince we know he *made* us?" So again, p. 112, ſpeaking upon the ſame ſubject he ſays, " if any fault is to be found in this " matter, it is not with Chriſt for not " teaching us more wiſdom than we are " capable of, but with GOD for not making " us wiſer than we are." So that when

any good is to be expected or hoped for, we muſt *recommend our plea* to Chriſt, but, if *any fault is to be found*, or we are diſpoſed to object to ſome imagined imperfection in our frame, then we "muſt "plead the cauſe with GOD." I verily believe, that, if any of the apoſtles of Chriſt had heard theſe diſcourſes, in which the glory of their lord and maſter is thus exalted to the diminution of the ſupreme father's goodneſs, they would ſcarce have complimented the preacher on the *ſoundneſs* of his faith.

But it may not be amiſs to conclude our reflections upon this head with obſerving, that, if there be indeed ſo much reaſon, as his lordſhip aſſures us there is, for puting our truſt and confidence in Chriſt, founded upon the diſcovery made in the goſpel of his having created us, there muſt upon the footing of natural religion be, at leaſt, equal reaſon for puting our truſt and confidence in the mercy of GOD? What, tho' "nature has not diſcovered the ſon of GOD," has it not diſcovered GOD himſelf? what, tho' nature has not given us the knowledge of that being, by whoſe *immediate* or ſecondary agency the world was made, has it not given us the knowledge of him, from whom this very being himſelf derived his power to create it, and received his authority for the exertion of it, to whoſe power and goodneſs therefore the

the creation is ultimately to be aſcribed? if Chriſt is *able to ſubdue all things to himſelf*, is the father of our lord Jeſus and of the intire univerſe leſs able to do this? can it be "*altogether* as natural *to found*" our *hopes upon* the *relation* we bear to a delegated creator, as upon that which we bear to the firſt and ſovereign creator? If we are *willing to believe that this great perſon*, the ſon of GOD, *would have ſome compaſſion upon the work of his own hands*, ought we not to be ſtill *more* "willing to believe" that a *greater* than he will have compaſſion on us his creatures; that he, who in an infinitely higher ſenſe, than can be applied to the creating power of the ſon of GOD, *made us in his own likeneſs* will *not want bowels of affection towards* us? can the *interceſſion* of any other being be neceſſary for exciting the compaſſion of him, who is himſelf the father of mercies? does not natural religion diſcover to us the relation we ſtand in to GOD as our creator, a creator of perfect wiſdom, power and goodneſs? does not his lordſhip himſelf tell us, that it does? where then can we better *recommend our pleas*, or more ſecurely place *our intereſt* than by refering both to him, who, as he is our creator, muſt neceſſarily too be the author of whatever happineſs we either do or may hereafter enjoy? would it not be *abſurd* to tell us, that GOD is *the lord of the world that is*,

and

and of that which is to come, and not to require *us to have hope and confidence in him? would it not be abſurd to tell us, that he is lord of life and glory, and to bid us expect life and glory* from *any other hands than his?* How comes it then, that his lordſhip, inſtead of *requiring* us to *put our confidence in him*, does his utmoſt to diſcourage us from it, by taking ſo much pains to prove, that natural religion, or that light of reaſon, which diſcovers to us theſe divine perfections, can ſcarce afford us a glimpſe of hope? how comes it, that he *bids us go to another* being for ſalvation? if from the relation we ſtand in to Chriſt as our creator, we may ſo ſafely and certainly infer his readineſs to ſave us, may we not with at leaſt equal certainty infer the ſame from the relation we ſtand in to God as our creator? how comes it then, that, in the one caſe his lordſhip has been ſo careful to deduce this concluſion, in the other to keep it out of ſight; nay, to advance the direct contrary principles; ſurely *ſuch expreſſions* as theſe, of *gratitude* to Chriſt *muſt reflect diſhonour upon the creator*, and for this very reaſon too are an indignity offered to the redeemer. What can be be a greater, than to ſuppoſe that a homage thus derogating from the divine perfections, from the glory of the great and ſovereign father of the univerſe, ſhould be acceptable to this "ſon of "his love," who, whilſt on earth, was ever zealous in aſſerting his infinite ſupremacy?

SEC-

SECTION. VII.

But let us now at length and in the laſt place conſider a few paſſages occuring in theſe *diſcourſes*, and which relate to the capacity of mankind for being rationally religious. " Go to the villages, ſays his lordſhip, p. 204. " vol. i. and tell the ploughmen, that, tho' " they ſin, yet their bodies ſhall ſleep in " peace; no material, no ſenſible fire ſhall " ever reach them, but there is ſomething, " within them purely intellectual, which ſhall " ſuffer to eternity; you will hardly find, that " they have enough of the intellectual to com- " prehend your meaning." What; not to diſtinguiſh between uneaſineſs of mind and pain of body; a diſtinction founded upon every man's immediate conſciouſneſs and daily experience! but his lordſhip obſerves, p. 149, that " if we know any thing with certainty " of mankind, it is this, that their principles, " opinions and practices are ſtrongly influ- " enced by cuſtom and education." He goes on " I will aſk any man, whether he thinks " it poſſible to alter this ſtate of things, and " to make all men as much philoſophers " and as much above prejudice as ſome pre- " tend to be? I believe no man in his ſenſes " ever thought this poſſible. If then men " are, and ever will be as long as they continue " men, greatly governed by cuſtom and edu- " cation, the ſingle queſtion is, whether it

" was

" was an act beneficent to mankind, and " becoming the wisdom of GOD, to direct " this influence to the side of virtue and " true religion, in order to make men happy, " rather than to leave them to be miserable, " under the strong influence to vice, super- " stition and idolatry, which had possession " of the world?" how much some men may pretend to be *above prejudices*, I know not. But this I am sure of, that *any man in his senses* may see, that *the state of things* with respect to religious prejudices, the prejudices here spoken of, might be very much *altered for the better*. Are they not industriously propagated by some? are they not indolently indulged by others? is not the utmost pains taken to prevent a freedom of enquiry? are there not numerous impediments purposely thrown in the way of it? are there no endeavors used even to persuade men, that they are not endued with any rational capacities fited for the study of religion? have we not in the very *discourses* we are now considering, a proof that there are? and lest any should, after all, be disposed to it, are they not terrified from employing their understanding in any such way, by the awe of civil authority, nay, of " everlasting " burnings?" And must the man be out of his wits, who says, that these things " may " *possibly* be altered for the better;" that mankind in general may *possibly* be wiser

and

and honeſter, than they really are, greater lovers of truth, more diligent and more impartial in their ſearches after it; that eccleſiaſtics in particular may *poſſibly* be leſs impoſing, more modeſt, humble and ingenuous, more deſirous to promote the cauſe of religious liberty, more cordial and more conſiſtent in profeſſing their regards to it, and leſs fond of worldly power and dominion? when we hear *a man in his ſenſes* ſaying, that in theſe reſpects there cannot *poſſibly* be any alteration for the better, we can ſcarce avoid ſuſpecting, that he wiſhes there *may* not, or at leaſt is perfectly indifferent, whether there be, or not. Men, may indeed, if they pleaſe, give themſelves up intirely to the influence of cuſtom, prejudice and education in matters of religious belief, and in fact they generally do. but then this is no reaſon, why they may not likewiſe reſcue themſelves from it. Some have done this; others therefore, even the generality, may. The very ſame kind of reaſoning with that, which is here advanced by his lordſhip *in favor* of religious prejudices, may be applied to vitious habits and men's neglect to cultivate the principles of virtue. It is but ſaying, that it is impoſſible " that *this ſtate of things ſhould be altered for the better*;" and all reformation is at end: vice and iniquity reign triumphant. And in fact by this

very reaſoning it is, that particular perſons do in ſo many fatal inſtances excuſe themſelves from all thoughts of correcting their evil habits, and that corrupt politicans maintain the innocence of keeping in countenance thoſe evil cuſtoms, of which they ſo much avail themſelves. The reaſoning, it muſt be owned, is concluſive in both caſes, if in either. And thus ſuperſtition, ignorance and vice may overſpread the world, whilſt we endeavor to perſuade both ourſelves and others indolently to look on and believe, that nothing can be done to prevent it. And very certain it is, that chriſtianity *may direct the influence of cuſtom and education to the ſide of virtue and true religion*, without excluding, or any way obſtructing, the uſe of human reaſon. For why ſhould not the exerciſe of reaſon make a part of *education?* why ſhould not the importance of cultivating it make one eſſential principle of *education?* why ſhould it not become a *cuſtom* among us, to uſe our reaſon in matters of religion a little more than we do. There are many expreſs precepts of the goſpel enjoining this. And theſe precepts among the reſt it contains are enforced upon us by that miraculous authority, which attended its firſt publication, and is ſtill the ground of our chriſtian faith. So that chriſtianity was not intended to ſuperſede the

the uſe of human reaſon, but to enforce it; not to avail itſelf of the power of prejudice, but to make men religious by conviction, and the perſonal perſuaſion of their own minds, *and to direct the influence of cuſtom and education*, on the *ſide* of reaſon and inquiry, as well on the *ſide* of virtue. If men muſt be unavoidably governed by the power of *prejudice*, *cuſtom* and *education*, then indeed it is infinitely better, that their influence ſhould be on the ſide of truth than of error, but this is no proof at all, that there is any ſuch neceſſity in the caſe. Neither is it true, as his lordſhip affirms, p. 150. that "the country-man's principles," implicitely believed "are as good a foun-"dation for all the duties and purpoſes "of religion as the philoſopher's, dedu-"ced by the uſe of his own "*reaſon*," ſuppoſing the principles to be the ſame. How different the impreſſion made upon our minds by thoſe ſenſible objects, which we ourſelves are eye-witneſſes, of, from that which is made by the report only of others, with reſpect to any ſuch objects, even tho' we have no doubt at all concerning the truth of what they affirm? the ſame natural difference exactly there is between true principles of religion implicitely believed, or by the ſtrength of our own reaſon, diſcerned. The implicit believer may indeed, by making the beſt uſe of

ſuch a faith, reap great and laſting advantages from it: the rational one by neglecting all ſerious thought about the improvement of his principles, may reap no benefit at all from them. But, who will take upon him to ſay, for this reaſon, that the natural advantages for virtuous improvement are in both theſe caſes equal. A rich man is oftentimes, as much or more in want of money, than a poor one, but is there therefore no conveniency in being rich? beſides, ſuppoſing that true principles of religion implicitely believed would have as natural a tendency to make uſeful impreſſions, as the ſame principles rationally admited, yet how, but by the excerciſe of our own reaſon, are we to diſtinguiſh between thoſe, which are true, and thoſe, which are falſe? without this, ſuch is the ſtate of religion in the world, that, ſuppoſing a man to have acquired ſome good principles relating to it, by means of cuſtom *and education*, yet will they probably be intermingled with others upon the ſame ſubject, of the moſt pernicious tendency. *Cuſtom* and *education* will be as likely to propagate the latter as the former. Even in a chriſtian country, if a man be reſolved to give himſelf up wholly to the power of *prejudice*, with reſpect to his religious belief, great undoubtedly will be his happineſs, ſhould his faith prove ſound and rational, but the odds,

odds, we muſt allow, will be againſt him. And what one reaſon can be more juſtly aſſigned for the little efficacy, which even the true principles of religion have upon the minds of many, that embrace them, than this, that they are really not their own principles, but thoſe of others implicitely received; blended likewiſe with ſo much ſuperſtition and error, as tends in a very high degree to defeat the good effect, that might otherwiſe be expected from their influence? And, after all, how deſirous ſo ever his lordſhip may be of having it believed, that mankind in general are incapable of being reaſoners upon the ſubject of religion, I think, we have experience enough to convince us of the contrary. Cicero, I apprehend, has given us an excellent definition of reaſon, when he ſays in his book de officiis, lib. i. §. 4. p. 7. Tool edit: Homo autem, quod rationis "eſt particeps, per quam conſequentia cer-"nit, cauſas rerum videt, earumque pro-"greſſus & quaſi anteceſſiones non ig-"norat, ſimilitudines comparat, & rebus "præſentibus adjungit atque annectit futu-"ras; facile totius vitæ curſum videt, ad "eamque degendam præparat res neceſ-"ſarias." Now, if, as is ſtrongly implied in this very paſſage itſelf, men could not without the exerciſe of ſuch a facultie as this, that is, without reaſoning, be capable

ble of engaging in any of the uſual occupations of life with any ſort of dexterity or ſucceſs, the various occupations, in which the generality of mankind are actually and very ſucceſsfully engaged, is a ſufficient proof that mankind in general are capable of reaſoning. The very loweſt mechanical art cannot be acquired without " diſcerning conſequences, penetrating into " the cauſes of things, obſerving their " progreſſion and even prognoſticating or " *anticipating* their effect, comparing things " that have any reſemblance, and connec- " ting things preſent with the future." And if a man can do all this in proſecuting his temporal affairs, why may he not be a reaſoner in religion? what does reaſoning upon the ſubject of religion implie, but the comparing of ideas, diſcerning the connection between cauſes and effects, between things preſent and things future, weighing evidence, attending to probability, and diſtinguiſhing between right and wrong. " There are" as his lordſhip obſerves, p. 153. but few " workmen perhaps, who " know the reaſon, and can demonſtrate the " mechanic powers of the inſtruments they " uſe; but being perfect in the uſe and " application of theſe powers, they are " able workmen and maſter-builders, which " is all, that is required of them." But ſtill it is true, that without reaſon they could

could not be *perfect even in the uſe and mechanical application of theſe inſtruments.* And as they who uſe them may not underſtand the principles upon which they are formed, ſo thoſe, who make them may be altogether as ignorant of the uſe of them. But without reaſon, it is plain, they can be neither made nor uſed. And it would be ſtrange indeed, if men were capable of reaſoning upon every other ſubject, but that of religion alone. Reaſon, we ſee, is natural to mankind. And if, as his lordſhip obſerves, p. 157, " all men will " have ſome religion either good or bad," it ſhould ſeem that religion is ſo too. And indeed this is the truth of the matter, religion is an affair, in which every man feels himſelf to be deeply intereſted. The ideas, about which it is converſant, are ſuch as are familiar to the minds of every one. And the principles, upon which all our reaſonings about it muſt depend, are ſimple, plain and obvious. So that there is in truth no ſubject, whatſoever, more adequate to the natural faculties of mankind. But " the people, his lordſhip tells " us, have no time for ſtudie." and that the generality of mankind have not *time* to *ſtudy* the learned languages, ancient hiſtory, chronology, mathematics, and the like, is very readily allowed; but what then! they have time to think and converſe. Nor does

does reaſoning about religion or acquiring juſt principles upon the ſubject, at all require the laborious employment, but may on the contrary be made the eaſy habit, of our lives. The difficulty is not in the work, but in perſuading ourſelves to ſet about it, which when we have once done, it will prove our beſt recreation and moſt delightful amuſement. It will naturally and pleaſingly intermingle itſelf with the affairs of life, and inſtead of hindering the buſineſs of our reſpective callings, would give us a greater chearfulneſs and alacrity in diſcharging it. And how wiſely, how happily might it be ſubſtituted in the room of that idleneſs and levity, that ſenſuality, and riot in, which to the unſpeakable detriment of ſociety, mankind too generally ſpend ſo many vacant hours! is it not furniſhing men with the ampleſt excuſe for this lamentable waſte of their precious time, to tell them, that they have not ſo much as a capacity for employing it in a better manner. And on the other hand, when theſe vices are once diſcarded, a very ſufficient inquirie into the truths and principles of religion may, for the moſt part, without much difficulty be carried on. For as Dr. Henry More well obſerves; *Dialogues* vol. ii. p. 58; " ſenſuality, levity, and pro-
" faneneſs of ſpirit makes holy things, tho'
" of themſelves very eaſy and pleaſant,

both

" both unpleaſant hard and tedious to ſuch " unmoralized minds." and Salluſt had made the ſame obſervation long before. " *Falſo* " queritur de natura ſua *genus humanum*, " quod imbecilla atque ævi brevis, forte " potius, quam virtute regatur. Nam contra, " reputando neque majus aliud, neque " præſtabilius invenias; magiſque naturæ " induſtriam hominum quam *vim* aut *tem-* " *pus* deeſſe. ſed dux atque imperator vitæ " immortalium animus eſt: qui, ubi ad glori- " am virtutis via graſſatur, abunde pollens po- " tenſque et clarus eſt, neque fortunæ eget: " quippe probitatem, induſtriam, alias artis " bonas, neque dare, neque eripere poteſt. " Sin captus pravis cupidinibus ad inertiam " & voluptatis corporis peſſum datus eſt,— " ubi per ſecordiam vires, tempus, ingenium " defluxere, naturæ infirmitas accuſatur; " ſuam quiſque culpam auctores ad negotia " transferunt," vid. Salluſt. bell. jugurth. ſub. init. ed. Glaſguae, p. 85. In the judgment it ſeems then, of this celebrated hiſtorian, it is not capacity or leiſure, but induſtry that is wanting in the caſe. In ſhort this duty of religious inquiry contained in thoſe expreſs precepts of the goſpel juſt now refered to, is by our bleſſed ſavior and his apoſtles inculcated in the ſame general terms, that are made uſe of in pointing out any other moral obligations whatſoever; and without the leaſt intimation of their being

appropriated to any particular rank or condition of life. "Search the ſcriptures." "Be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding "what the will of the lord is. prove all "things. beloved, believe not every ſpirit, "but try the ſpirits, whether they are "of GOD." How far the principles advanced by the biſhop in the diſcourſes we have been reviewing, are calculated to enforce, or on the contrary, to diſcourage the obſervance of theſe ſacred precepts, let the reader judge. For my own part, I cannot but think that an important ſentiment of Dr. Barrows, which we meet with in his admirable *expoſition* of the decalogue is directly deducible from them. commenting in a very excellent ſtrain on the fourth commandment, he grounds upon the general purport of it, this, among ſeveral other concluſions. "That we are bound to reſtrain ourſelves in "the proſecution of worldly buſineſs, not "diſtracting our minds with care, not exhauſting our bodies with toil about them; "but allowing our mind convenient and "ſeaſonable freedom, affording our ſoul "ſufficient leiſure, with vigour and alacrity to enjoy its nobler entertainments, "and to purſue its higher intereſts." And very humanely, yet not beyond what is in moral juſtice due, he extends this obſervation to all mankind. For theſe are his immediately following words. "Third-

"ly,

" ly, that we are obliged to uſe the ſame " indulgence towards thoſe, whom divine " providence has diſpoſed to be under our " power, care or governance, to allow " our children, our ſubjects, our ſervants, " a competent meaſure of reſt and refreſh- " ment from their ordinary labours, ſuf- " ficient time and leiſure undiſtractedly " to ſerve GOD and quietly to mind their " ſpiritual welfare." See p. 147, 148, of his *brief expoſition* of the lords-prayer, and the decalogue, *&c.* a moſt excellent manual of chriſtian piety and morals. Numerous examples might eaſily be produced of thoſe in common life, who, notwithſtanding their habitual engagement in ſecular affairs, have found time to applie their thoughts very ſucceſsfully to the ſtudie of religion. Even in one ſingle paſſage of hiſtory numerous examples to this purpoſe occur. let that therefore for the preſent ſuffice. Biſhop Burnet I refer to, who tell us in the *hiſtory of his own times*, vol. i. p. 410, that when himſelf and ſome other clergymen were preaching in the weſtern parts of Scotland, " they were a- " mazed to ſee a *poor commonalty* ſo ca- " pable of arguing upon points of go- " vernment, and on the bounds to be ſet " to the power of princes in matters of " *religion.*" " Upon all theſe topics, he " ſays, they had texts of ſcripture at hand,

" and were ready with their anſwers to any " thing that was ſaid to them. He adds; " this meaſure of knowledge was ſpread " even among the meaneſt of them, their " cottagers and their ſervants." The hiſtorian paſſes no cenſure upon theſe honeſt *cottagers* for neglecting the neceſſary occupations of life; nor was there any reaſon to be *amazed* at *this meaſure* of knowledge, as indicating any uncommon powers of reaſon; but only a better uſe, than is generally made, of thoſe which belong in ordinary to human nature as ſuch. It was ſaid by another biſhop of our church, the preſent biſhop of Oxford, in a ſermon preached above eleven years ago, and in the time of the late rebellion, p. 29, " our ab- " horrence of popery is gone." We are very far from having any reaſon to believe, that it is ſince returned. and if the papiſts, may be allowed to be any judges in their own cauſe, nothing can be more likely to call back popery itſelf, inſtead of our *abhorrence* of it, than the depreſſing human reaſon, as we have ſeen it done by my lord biſhop of London.

CONCLUSION.

And now, upon the whole, it is natural to aſk, where can be the neceſſity, where the advantage of depretiating, after the manner of his lordſhip, the religion of nature

ture and the reaſon of mankind? let reaſon and natural religion enjoy all the privileges and honors that were ever claimed in their behalf; ſtill may not the goſpel appear to be a moſt excellent and admirably adapted means of promoting the purity, dignity and perfection of human reaſon, and of carrying on the original and immutable deſigns of nature? nay, let us ſuppoſe, that reaſon and natural religion had actually excluded ſuperſtition and idolatry out of the whole heathen world, that theſe dreadful corruptions of religion had never ſubſiſted amongſt mankind, yet had the immediate, the external, the miraculous and traditionary evidences of chriſtianity been the ſame, as they are now, would there have been any thing wanting to recommend it to our belief and joyful acceptance? might we not have gladly and piouſly embraced it as a divinely-concerted ſcheme for exalting the great intereſts of virtue in the world? could it poſſibly have propoſed an end more important to man, more ſutable to his nature, his views, his hopes? why then ſhould we, without any ſort of neceſſity in the caſe, give the rejecter of chriſtianity the opportunity of retorting with ſo much eaſe, but yet with ſo much force, as we have ſeen he may, the argument drawn from this ſuperſtition and idolatry, in proof of a real, an inherent

inherent and unavoidable inſufficiency in natural religion, to anſwer the purpoſes of human virtue and ſalvation? why, as advocates for the goſpel, contend for the "blindneſs" of nature, when after all we cannot conſiſtently do it, but are ourſelves obliged, before we have done with our argument, to appeal to its light? natural religion has the nature of man and the perfections of GOD for its foundation; the love of GOD and the love of man for its end. And it is impoſſible for us to derogate from or diſparage it, without ſeeming at leaſt to depretiate theſe. And can this be of any advantage to our cauſe as advocates for chriſtianity, or at all conduce to the happineſs of mankind? had the revd. Mr. Dodd attended to ſuch reflections as theſe, would he have ventured to call *natural religion* "a mere phantom, a vile tare;" as he does in his diſcourſes on the parables, vol. i. p. 117? Will it be eaſy to perſuade the preſent rejecter of the goſpel that any thing can in reality be of greater importance to his own happineſs, or the general happineſs of his fellow-creatures, than the perfections of their creator, the love and adoration of him, the reſemblance of his ſpotleſs excellencies, and the cultivation of their own intelligent and moral powers? in this way he thinks he has ſufficient ground

to

to hope for the divine acceptance and favor. And ſhall we, in order to lead him to the mercy-ſeat of Chriſt, attempt to drive him from the throne of God? ſhall we endeavor to perſuade him, that the very author of his being, the great original himſelf of life and happineſs, is ſevere, unpropitious and inexorable, and that, if he would ſecure his own ſalvation, he muſt look out for ſome better friend? is the father of the univerſe to be degraded, that Chriſt may be exalted? has Chriſt himſelf, has any of his apoſtles preſcribed ſuch a method of vindicating his honor, or of promoting the intereſts of his religion? do they not always repreſent the father of ſpirits as benign, placable and forgiving to his creature man? does not our bleſſed ſavior in particular point out the goodneſs of the ſovereign deity, as what muſt neceſſarily be the ground of human hope, if man is to hope at all, when in expreſs and ſolemn terms he aſſerts, that all other goodneſs is infinitely inferior to it, and in compariſon not worthy of being called ſo? "Why calleſt thou me good? "there is none good ſave one, that is, God." are we then to clothe this gracious father of our beings with frowning majeſty and unrelenting vengeance? or with what propriety is it maintained, that the diſcoveries of this divine goodneſs ſo clearly made by the

the light of nature, and the reaſon of our own minds, can at beſt only afford us ſome faint expectations of mercy, accompanied with bewildering fears and endleſs uncertainty? but if, after all, reaſon and natural religion muſt be diſcarded as enemies to the goſpel, where will be our beſt criterion for the uſefulneſs of the goſpel-ſcheme itſelf? where our ſecurity againſt the moſt enormous corruptions of it? where our proteſtant-bulwark againſt the attacks of popery? or, if chriſtianity be indeed a rational religion, how ſhall we be able to convince the world, that it is that alone, in its ſimplicity, purity and god-like form we contend for, when appearing in its defence, whilſt at the very time we do ſo, we diſcourage to the utmoſt of our power, the uſe of reaſon in the ſtudie of it. For my own part, I am perſuaded, that by thus attempting to eſtabliſh the goſpel upon the diſparagement of natural religion; upon its ſuppoſed inſignificancy, and utter incompetency for anſwering the purpoſes of human happineſs, we are in the greateſt danger of loſing them both. And this, I hope, will be admited, as a very ſufficient reaſon for my having undertaken that review, which is now completed.

FINIS.